NUTS FOR BOYS TO CRACK

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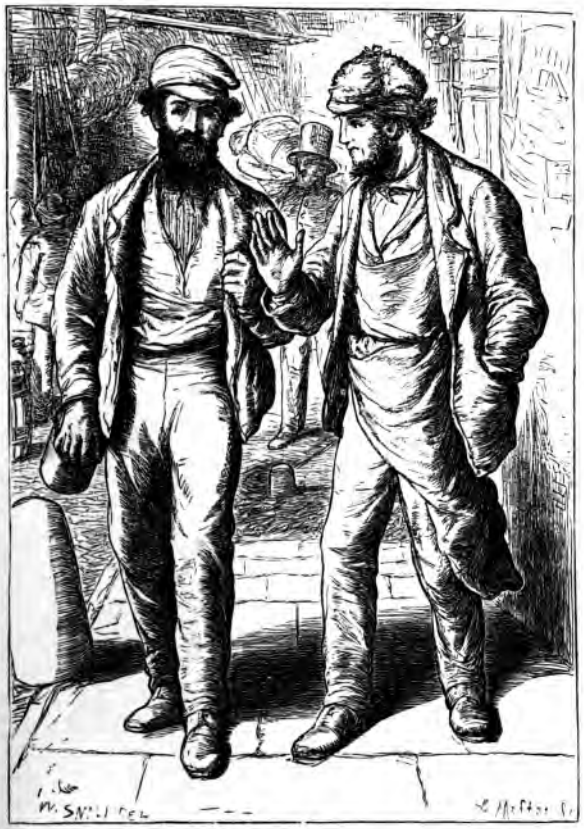

IN EARNEST CONVERSATION.

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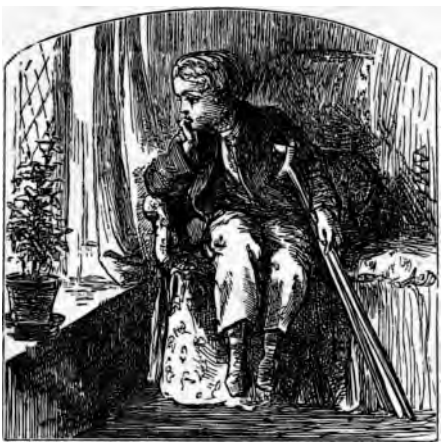

THE LAME BOY.

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THOMAS NELSON AND SONS,
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

NUTS FOR BOYS TO CRACK.

BY

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London:
THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1879.

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NUTS FOR BOYS TO CRACK.

The Prairie and the Mountain.

MRS. PRAIRIE was one day looking up into the clear blue sky, and admiring the snowy clouds as they slowly sailed over her. She had just come back from a long retirement, during which she had worn a thick, cold, white robe, under which she had had long and quiet dreams. But lately waking up, recovered in health and spirits, she had been under the hand of Mrs. Spring, a wonderful milliner, who had made her new robes, adorning them with vines and flowers of the most exquisite form and colour, and had thrown over all a veil of glory that made her truly queenly. A more gorgeous dress, woven in the loom of Nature, was never seen. But as she gazed on the sky, she happened to turn her eye northward, where she saw a blue object rising up and

calmly looking down upon her, as if admiring the proud beauty.

"And who may you be, sir, that has the impertinence to gaze so steadily at a 'lady'?"

"My name is Mountain, madam."

"Well, Mr. Mountain, I won't deny that I have heard of you before, standing there alone, on one foot—for though I have heard of the foot of the mountain, I have never heard of his feet—and your cold, bare, hard head lifted up among the clouds, and your brow of stone, and your sides bristling with trees, and your heart nothing less than a huge rock. I have heard of your name, Mr. Mountain, before this; but pray, sir, if I may ask without giving offence, of what use are you to the world? I understand people cannot climb your sides, nor look to you for harvests, or gardens, or even building spots. There are a few wolves, it may be, that now and then entertain you with their music, and a few feeble rabbits that hop up and down your sides, and perhaps a noisy blue-jay chatters music to you. And then, sir, I'm told your head is almost always drenched with rains and swept by storms. Indeed, sir, I cannot for my life see what you are made for."

"Be pleased, madam, to tell me what you are made for."

"Me! why, you must be blind if you do not see. Don't you see that I am spread out far and

wide; that in my wild state the deer, the prairie chicken, the beautiful quail, and every animal and bird have their home in my bosom? Don't you see how, in my wild condition, every flower and every beautiful thing that can grow nestle over me; that when men come, they first admire, and then apply to me, and I give them out wheat and corn and cotton without measure; that enormous granaries are built to receive my produce, and ships carry it all over the world; and that I am the meal-chest of nations? The rains fall upon me, coming from the far-off ocean, and the dews cool me nightly, and a thousand little streams and springs circulate as veins through me, refreshing, gladdening, fertilizing every part of me. They count my contributions by the million, and the world bows to me as a mighty mistress. Now, Mr. Mountain, what can you say for yourself? Of what possible use are you, I beg to know, and by what right do you lift up your head so high, seeming to say, 'I don't think much of Mrs. Prairie down yonder'? I don't mean to be uncivil, Mr. Mountain, but you know that we ladies have delicate nerves, and it really makes me nervous to look at you—so cold, so stern, so solitary, as if you hadn't a friend in the world, and didn't want one."

"Madam," meekly and slowly answered Mr. Mountain, but with a rough kind of voice,

"madam, I have but little to say for myself, and don't pretend to compare myself with you. I have stood here alone for ages, and if I have had but one foot, it has been a strong one. My Maker placed me here, with this lofty head and stony form, that I might condense the currents of air as they sweep over the continent, and form clouds and bring rain. Cloud-making, madam, is my great business. They gather around my head and sides, they pour their treasures down on me: the waters run into every cavern and hollow I have, and then break out into little springs, gather into ponds and lakes and rivers; and thus the waters come to you and pervade you and cheer you; and there is not a blade of grass, nor a flower on your bosom, nor a stalk of wheat, which is not nourished by the waters condensed and supplied by us mountains. More than forty ponds look to me to keep them filled, and several rivers flow from these. I stand here alone, Mrs. Prairie, receiving no thanks and no praise. But take me away, and every stream that comes to you would be dry, and you yourself, madam, would be a shrivelled-up old lady, with no flowers on your broad skirts and no bread in your hand, shunned by man, and inhabited only by monsters. Your fertility and glory come from me; and though you will wear out by tillage and become poorer by-and-by, I have the hope that I shall

stand here no less useful, no less necessary, and still honoured by those who know my mission. If I am by such as you scorned and 'left out in the cold,' I shall still have the consciousness that the streams that I create manufacture clothing for the same multitude that come to you for bread."

Thus the mountain ministers to the prairie, and the prairie to man; and thus the North and the South, the East and the West of our land, all need each other, and none can be spared. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Ponto and Flirt.

PONTO was an old dog, and lay on the sunny bank just in front of the laurel bushes, so that he might have all the sunshine and none of the cold winds. He was very mild and grave in countenance, and when you went up to him he would get up, wink hard at you, and seem to say, "Yes, sir, we have met before." He seemed to live in the past, so far as he took an interest in anything; but he was gentle and kind, and everybody seemed to be Ponto's friend.

Little Flirt was a dog of a different stamp. He was all run and jump, and bark and play. He would often visit old Ponto; and then how he would scamper round him, look knowingly in his eyes, squat and look, and then jump and bound and bark, as if he would say, "Well, Mr. Ponto, *did* you ever see anything like that?" Old Ponto would look at him with awful gravity, as

much as to say, "That's all well enough in a dog which has not yet come to years of discretion."

But one day Flirt came out to see Ponto on a sober walk. His tail drooped, and his face was grave, and he walked like one going to a funeral.

"Ponto," says he, "I'm going to leave."

"Indeed."

"Yes. I am determined to stay here no longer. *I am resolved to run away.*"

"Pray where will you run?"

"Oh, I don't know. I'll find somewhere."

"Well, what's the matter?"

"Matter enough. I'm tired of my master. You have always said he was one of the kindest of masters. But now I know better. You know old *Cub*, the brown horse, don't you?"

"I should think I do. I have run beside him times enough and miles enough to know him."

"Has he not always been a good, faithful old horse?"

"Not always *old*, but always good and faithful."

"Well, he has been sick lately. He has grown very thin. He would stand all day and bite his crib and gnaw the planks, and groan in pain. He has lost his appetite, and I thought he must die. But yesterday, when our master

led him out, I thought, 'Well, now he will kill poor old Cub, and put him out of pain, or else give him some comforting thing that he can eat.' But instead of that—oh dear, how dreadful!—he took him down to the blacksmith's shop, and put the poor fellow in a frame in which they put oxen sometimes; and then turned the leather under him so that he could not stand on his feet; and then put a great stick in his mouth and fastened it open; and then he took a huge piece of flat iron—I believe they call it a *file*—and with that he sawed in between every tooth in the poor fellow's mouth. Poor Cub groaned, and the blood ran, but no matter—rasp, rasp went the file, till there was a parting between every tooth. If that is not cruelty, I should like to know what is. I am going to run away. The cruel man will be sawing my teeth next. Who knows?"

"Suppose, Flirt, you just run into the stable and see what old Cub is now doing."

Away bounded Flirt, and soon came back with a look of amazement.

"Why, Ponto, as true as you live, old Cub is eating hay as he never ate before."

"Don't swear, Flirt, and say 'As true as you live;' but now sit down and learn a thing or two, —it may do you good as long as you live. You must know, then, O wise Flirt, that horses were made to eat grass, and to bite it, and draw it into

the mouth. This naturally draws their teeth out and spreads them. Old Cub has been shut up in the stall and fed on cut food for years. The consequence is, his teeth came tight together, and they ached, and this made him have what they call 'crib-biting,' or 'cribbering.' Now master, by filing them apart, has relieved the pain, and the old horse can eat as well as ever. He put him in the ox-frame and fastened his mouth open only as the easiest way to do it—easiest for the horse. So, you young dog, see that it was not cruelty but kindness in our master to file old Cub's teeth."

"Oh, I see it, I see it all. What a fool I was! I will never doubt my master again."

Oh, my son, you will often meet things in Divine Providence that seem strange to you, and which look as if God were not wise and good; but when these come to be explained hereafter, we shall see that in everything God *is* wise and good and merciful. We cannot always understand what he does, but "just and true are all his ways." Remember Flirt when you are tempted to doubt his wisdom or his goodness.

Shooting the Shark.

THE great ship-of-war lay at easy anchor in the beautiful bay, and the waters slept around her, smooth as a mill-pond and silvery as glass. The sailors were idly moving here and there on the ship's deck, for there was nothing to be done. The old boatswain, a favourite with all, was among them, telling his long stories, or as they called it, "spinning his long yarns." Among this crew was a bright little boy, a son of the old boatswain, the idol of his father and the pet of all the sailors. He was so cheerful and bright and good-natured, that there was nothing which they would not do for "little Jem." The morning was warm, and the water just of the right temperature for bathing. A group of the sailors leaned over the side of the ship, and seemed greatly delighted with something they saw. It was "little Jem," their pet, far out from the ship swimming alone. He

could whirl over, dive, float, or shoot forward like a duck.

"Boatswain," cried one, "what a swimmer little Jem is."

"Ay," said the father; "he seems to take to the water kind o' natural. I never had to teach him."

"Boatswain, boatswain,—a shark! a shark! Oh, he will get Jem in one minute more."

The old man leaped up, and a single glance took it all in. Yonder was his son playing in the water, lying on his back, unconscious of any danger, and a huge shark making straight towards him, and it was plain that in a very short time he would be crunching the limbs of the boy. The old man remembered that one of the cannon was shotted. Quick as a flash, and with almost superhuman strength, he put the gun in position, depressed the muzzle, aimed a few feet between the child and the shark—just where the fish would be in a single instant. The match was applied,—the gun roared and reeled. The poor father sank down on the deck, too faint to look. The smoke cleared away, and up rose a shout from the sailors, almost as loud as the roar of the gun.

"What is it?" called the father.

"Oh, Jem is safe! There lies the shark, dead and torn in pieces. How could you move the

gun, and sight her, and get her off so quickly and so accurately?"

"I don't know, but I believe God helped me. Won't some of you bring Jem to me?"

The next moment a boat was lowered and the oars were bending as she cut her way to the boy. He had just begun to understand the thing, and was paralyzed with terror. Gently they lifted him into the boat, and in a few minutes placed him in the arms of his weeping father. The old man seemed to receive him as from the dead, and could only rock him in his arms and cry like a babe.

How wonderful that Providence that stepped in, and from a source so uncommon and unsuspected, sent salvation to the life of that child. The only man who could have managed the gun so quickly and so accurately, the only man who thought of the thing, was the father. And when life and death hung on an instant of time, and on the accuracy of his eye and the steadiness of his hand, we see he had them all in full use as long as needed.

My young reader, there are sharks after you, with wide jaws and sharp teeth—coming directly towards you! Will any power come in between you and them and save you? Have you a Father watching over you who will see that you are safe?

There is one boy who has several sharks after him in the shape of companions who are profane, unclean in conversation, who are trying to make him swear and drink and smoke. Will they succeed? Will his heavenly Father send in some power that will save him? Perhaps the prayers of his mother, or the gentle voice of his sister, or the loving heart of some good boy may be the instrument. Perhaps his Sabbath-school teacher will become that power. The Holy Spirit may make use of one or other or of all these.

There is another boy who has a shark coming towards him in the temptation to forget the fifth commandment, and not to honour his father and his mother. The hour in which he does this he puts himself beyond the promise of life, and his end may be near! There is a third upon whom the shark, in the form of doubt and unbelief, has fastened his eye. Will he reach him and destroy his faith in his mother's prayers, in his father's religion, in the Word of God, and in the name and salvation of Jesus?

Oh that between every child and his great spiritual danger there might come a power *loud as the cannon's roar, quick as the speed of a ball, and sure as the eye of a loving father.*

The Power of Memory.

A BEING fair as the dawn, with bright hair and a clear eye, came and bent over the cradle and kissed the new-created infant. Her name was Hope. Just then a little sister brought it a flower, on which the child clapped its hands joyfully: then Hope promised that it should soon gather fairer flowers for itself.

The infant grew and became a boy. On a summer's twilight he was amusing himself alone, when another being, with a sweet, serious face, came and sat down by him. Her name was Memory, and she said, "Look behind thee, boy, and tell me what thou seest."

"I see a beautiful path bordered with flowers. Butterflies spread their gay wings over it, and birds sing all around it. It seems as if it were a path that I had trodden, for the little foot-prints in it look like my own, and the cradle at its end —so very near—looks like mine."

"What art thou holding in thy hand?"

And he answered, "A book which my own dear mother gave me."

"Bring it to me and I will turn it into honey when thy hair shall be turned gray."

The boy became a youth. Once he found Hope and Memory both sitting beside him. Hope broke out into a song, sweet as that which the lark sings as she shakes off the dew of night and rises up to greet the morning. "Follow me," said Hope, "and thy heart shall sing like a harp with golden strings."

"O Hope," said Memory, "let him be mine also; and while he keepeth virtue in his heart we shall be to him as sisters as long as he liveth. Thou wilt lead him to accumulate, and I will keep for him all that is worth keeping." So he gave a hand to each, and both blessed him.

He became a man. Hope came and girded him for duty every morning, and every night he supped at the table of Memory, with a delightful guest whose name was Knowledge.

At length Age found the man, and Time sprinkled his hoar-frost on his temples. His eye became dim, and the chambers of the ear became confused, and the warm blood in his veins moved cold and slow, and he thought it was the earth, and not himself, that had changed.

Memory came and sat down by the chair of

the old man, and looked at him with loving eyes. And he said, "Memory, sister dear, thou dost not keep my jewels safely. I fear some of them are lost."

Mournfully and meekly she replied,—

"It may be so. The lock of my casket is worn; and sometimes I am weary and fall asleep, and then Time comes and purloins my key. But of the gems thou gavest me when a child and a youth, I have lost none. See, they are as bright and beautiful as on the day I received them." Memory looked pitifully on him, and the old man had learned to forgive. Hope began to show him a wing which another sister, called Faith, had been making, and he smiled.

The aged man lay down to die. As his soul went forth from the body, the angels took charge of it. But Memory went up by his side, and with him passed through the gates of Heaven. Poor Hope stopped at the gate and there expired, like a dying rose giving its sweetest odours out as it dies. But just before she expired she beckoned to a beautiful angel, whose name was Immortal Happiness, and committed to her the spirit she had so long attended on Earth. "Religion," said she, "has planted in that soul such seed as will make it thine for ever. I shall not be needed any more."

Her dying words were like the music of some

breaking harp, mournful, but sweet; and the angel replied, "Dear earth-born sister, Hope must die, but Memory is as eternal as the books from which men are judged. From her tablets not one deed of Earth can ever be erased."

The Persian Traveller.

A PERSIAN traveller came to our country to see "the New World," as he had heard it called. On his arrival, instead of finding a few huts with thatched roofs, as he had expected, he found a great rich city, the largest he had ever seen. The great ships lay at the wharves; the tall masts looked like a forest; and the harbour was full of shipping of all kinds. So he landed, and went to the hotels, and travelled through the different States; saw the farms, the factories, the schools, and the benevolent institutions, such as hospitals, asylums, and the like. At length he reached Washington. Congress and the Senate were about to adjourn. Among other things he felt very anxious to see the President of the United States. A friend walked with him to the White House, and introduced him.

"Well," said the President after the compli-

ments of the introduction, "what do you think of our country?"

"Sir, I have no words to express my wonder."

"Will you please explain yourself?"

"Why, sir, on my arrival they carried me to a magnificent palace, which they call a hotel. We have no palace in Persia so large. When I came to travel, instead of riding a donkey or a hired horse, and moving at the rate of twenty miles a day, they put me into a beautiful house, and whirled me off three hundred miles a day. Then I said, 'Why, their very caravans are better off than our richest citizens are at the homes which have taken generations to adorn.' Then, sir, they took me to a great palace-looking building where hundreds of blind people were gathered together, and where they read with their fingers, and where they made sweet music, and were very happy. 'Oh,' I said, 'the very blind in this land are better off than those who have eyes in my country.' Then they took me to another such place, where those were gathered together who could neither hear nor speak; but they could read and write anything, and could talk with their fingers, by making signs. Ah, those in this country who are born deaf are better off than those in my country who can hear with both ears. No ears and no eyes are here better than two ears and two eyes at home. Then, Mr.

President, I came to Washington. To my amazement I found no army here, no body-guard for the chief magistrate of this great nation. I hear that you, sir, were up at the Capitol last evening till after midnight, signing the bills which Congress had passed, and that then in the dark you walked quietly home alone, without a guard or anybody to defend you. I see no army in all the States where I have been; and one governor of a great State I actually found with his hired man planting potatoes! Sir, to one who has been born and brought up where armies and swords are everywhere, this state of things has amazed me beyond expression."

"Do you like it?"

"Oh, more than I can describe to you."

"How do you account for it?"

"Sir, there is only one answer to that question. *Your land is governed by the Bible, mine by the sword.* Your Bible has done more for you in one century than the sword has done for us in twenty centuries. Here you don't see the law; you don't hear it. It is a sort of thing that seems to dwell in the air, out of sight; but it comes down the moment it is called. With my country, law is made material; it is in armies and guns and guards. It is like wearing a heavy iron mail shirt, instead of the loose cotton kind. Your Bible has made schools and colleges and institu-

tions of learning; our sword never reared a school-house in all Persia. Your Bible makes readers; and so you have papers and magazines and books, and a reading, thinking nation. Our sword makes no readers, no thinkers, no teachers of good things. Oh, sir, there is no department of life in which we are not centuries behind you. I find that your people don't know what has made this nation what it is; but it is plain to me. And now, sir, I beg your pardon for talking so long, and telling you what you know; but you were so good as to ask my opinion, and I could not give it in fewer words. May you, sir, live twelve thousand moons, and your country live as long as the sun and moon endure. I thank you, Mr. President, for the light of your face, and that I may go home and tell my countrymen that great position and high office never look so majestic as in their naked simplicity."

The president and the traveller both arose, shook hands, smiled, made each a low bow, and the traveller went on his way. The president was heard to say to himself, "The fellow is right."

Air-line Postboys.

A FATHER was going to the telegraph-office to send a message to a distant city. He held the paper containing the words in one hand, and led his little girl, between two and three years old, in the other. Just before they reached the office they passed the wires of the telegraph on the high poles.

"Now, father," said the child, "please lift me up and let me put the paper on the wires."

This was her idea of sending by the telegraph. And had the paper been laid on the wires, and then flown off in an instant, and anon come back with the answer, it would hardly have been more wonderful than the way messages are sent. Go into such an office at midnight, the darkest night you ever saw. One little lamp stands by the instrument. You give your message to the operator. He makes a few quick thumps or

knocks, and in an instant your message is in a distant city, perhaps two hundred miles off. In another instant the answer comes back. How much like magic! What travelling! We should think the speed would melt the wires. "Electricity—it's all done by electricity," they tell us. But pray, what is electricity? It is not thought; for it never carries a message till some human mind sends it. It seems a kind of postboy running over the wires as fast as our thoughts can go, with the message in his pocket. I sometimes stop near one of the wire-poles, and look at the wire as it seems to ache by hard stretching—cold and lonely and useless. But as I look at it I seem to have a new and lively interest awakened, and I wonder if the electricity that spins over these wires touches every particle of the iron, or does it leap as the hound does when chasing the deer? I wonder if it goes inside of the wire, or on the outside, or does it occupy every part of it? I wonder if it leaves a heat in its fiery path; for it is fire, as much as the lightning is fire. There now; I see the wire quivers. Is it because the wind blows, or because the messages are going on it? I can almost hear the clinking of the operative's machine; and, by a kind of indescribable process, I seem to be able to read the messages as they fly along, one after another.

Now, then, that message tells the far-off friends

that they have a new-born child at home; and as it is read, a dozen voices all at once shout for joy, and each is contriving what little thing he can send to the little stranger, "whom not having seen" they "love." So we *can* love an immortal thing which we have never seen. So we *can* love Jesus Christ, though we have not seen him.

Now then, that message tells of sickness: "Very sick; come immediately." The very wires seem sad. What a stir that message creates! How they hurry off to "call father," and help mother to pack up; and how they tremble and silently drop tears all over the house, but try to "hope for the best," and keep cheerful, and give courage to the sinking heart of the mother. She wonders if she can get there to see her child alive, or whether she is going to his funeral.

Ah, then there goes one bearing no doubtful message. It is to that large, beautiful house. It tells them that he, the husband and the father, is dead, and will be buried on Thursday. What a blow! They are stunned; they seem crushed. Heavy shadows fall on that dwelling, never again to be lifted up. I can almost hear the feet of the strangers who will soon possess and occupy that beautiful home. The hand that provided for all, and that held them all together, is useless now, and they must first mourn, then feel disappointed, and then scatter.

Here goes a message telling that the wanderer over the world has arrived, and will be at home shortly; and they go to kill the fatted calf and make ready. And here is one telling of the failure of a great firm, and scores are bankrupt thereby, and hundreds and even thousands must suffer by the fraud. So they go, carrying—these nimble postboys—tidings of births and deaths, marriages and greetings, fortunes made and lost, broken bones and high fevers, and all the joys and sorrows, the surprises and the disappointments that make up the lot of man. This "air-line" messenger never stops nor tires. Day and night, summer and winter, its bosom is filled with human joys and sorrows, without any sympathy or suffering itself.

"Well, what do all these meditations lead to?" says the reader. Why, kind friend, they lead me to feel that He, the Infinite One, who made this electricity to carry human thoughts and feelings thus, must have that invisible telegraph by which *prayer* directly reaches his ear. I feel, too, that it would kill me to listen to all that passes over these wires in a single day; and yet the joys and sorrows of the Church and of the world, (and we know not how many worlds,) rise up continually before him, and still his ear is not heavy, nor his arm shortened, because he is an infinite Redeemer, "God over all, blessed for ever."

The Artichoke.

"I COULD never see," said a gardener to himself, "what these artichokes were made for. They take up room, are hard to grub up, and are really of no earthly use. I wish I could kill every one of them."

This he said as he was trying to root them out, in early spring, from his garden. Just then he heard a voice :—

"I say, Coleman, have you such a thing as a single artichoke in your garden? I very much want one."

"Why, I had plenty, but have just given them all to the pigs. But why do you want it, Mr. James?"

"You know that I have a sick child. She is confined to her room, and has little appetite. She was saying to me this morning that she thought she should relish an artichoke cut up in

vinegar. I have been almost everywhere, and can't find any. The river is between you and me, or I would ask you to let me come and search your garden further."

"Hold on a minute, sir, and I'll see."

Coleman slowly and not very cheerfully began to dig again, and to his unexpected joy—for we all love to feel that we have done something to comfort the sick—he soon found a nice artichoke.

"Well, here's one; but how shall I get it over the river?"

"Throw it, and I will do my best to catch it and keep it from being crushed on the ground."

"There; thank you, thank you much," said Mr. James as he went off rubbing his hands, which the artichoke hurt as he caught it.

The humble artichoke was carried home, and nothing said about it till the invalid saw the thin, delicate slices, in the little plate at her dinner. How she thanked her father, and wondered what ailed his bruised hand, I need not tell.

From that day onward Coleman began to take an interest in the invalid, and would often send her a bouquet or some single beautiful flower. His thoughtful remembrance awakened an interest in the heart of the sick one also in his behalf.

Some months after the digging of the artichoke the invalid called to her father and said,—

"I hear that the pretty little cottage on the

bank of the river is to be sold. Now, father, would not that be just the thing for Coleman? He wants a home, and has, I hear, a few hundred dollars saved. It seems to me to be just the thing for him."

"I never thought of it; but I will inquire."

Hardly had Mr. James got out of doors when he met his friend Coleman in a state of evident excitement. He had walked fast, and was flushed.

"Oh! Master James—just the man I wanted to see."

"What is it, Coleman?"

"Why, sir, the Beede place is going to be sold, I hear, and Susan and I *do* want it so much. But there are two things that trouble us: first, we don't know that it would be good property to buy; and, secondly, we don't know how to pay for it. We have saved half enough, but don't know what to do for the rest. What do you advise us, sir?"

"By all means to buy it. As to its being a good bargain, I have just had the opinion of one who seldom misjudges on that point."

"Who is that, sir?"

"The sick one for whom you dug the artichoke last spring. As to the other half of the pay, tell the owner I will be responsible if he wants other security besides yours."

Away bounded Coleman with a tear in his eye.

The cottage was bought, the rose bushes were trimmed, the little garden was planted, and a prettier, cosier place, was not to be found.

Years afterwards, Susan one evening found her husband in the garden, leaning on his hoe, and great tears rolling down his cheeks. She came up to him and said gently, "What *is* the matter, John?"

"I am crying over my own thoughts, Susan. Many years ago I was digging in my garden, when Mr. James called to me to find him an artichoke for his sick child. Very reluctantly, and feeling cross, I dug and found one—only *one*. I tried for no more. That artichoke made that young lady our friend, and it was through her means that we got our pleasant little home; and we have got it all paid for. We have been happy here. Mr. James has ever been our warm, firm friend. But that dear young lady has been in her grave for years. I never think it over without also thinking how much grew out of one poor artichoke, and how wrong I was to be so unwilling to do that little kindness for her. Oh, if she were alive I feel that I should love to go right up there and ask her forgiveness."

"She's done with all that, John; but we will never forget her—no, nor even the poor artichoke."

Walking.

E should probably be frightened if we knew how often we come near to death. Almost every one can recall the time and place when he was within an inch of losing his life. A single fall may so strike the head as to paralyze us all the rest of our life. A single slip on an icy path may break a bone and lead us to our grave. I once knew a physician a strap of whose carriage harness broke as he was going down a mountain, and that frightened the horses, and that threw him out of the carriage, broke his bones, and cost him his life. Some time ago, on one of our terribly cold days, a man went off to the woods to chop wood. He had only a little boy with him. The place was several miles from home. In swinging the axe, it struck a very small twig or branch of a tree, and yet that so turned the axe, that instead of striking the

log it struck the full blow upon the poor fellow's knee. The blood flowed, and the man fell. The frightened little boy ran for help, but instead of going to the nearest house, his little feet went all the way home. The consequence was that when help reached the poor sufferer he had fainted and the wound was frozen. It resulted in his having the lock-jaw, and his consequent death. And yet how often is the axe swung in the woods, and men escape death!

I sometimes stop and watch a bare-footed little boy. He runs like a squirrel, and is nearly as lively. He does not stop to see where he is to put down his foot, or even think of it. On he rushes. Should he step into a hole, it might cost him a broken limb. Should he step on a nail, it might cost him the lock-jaw. A little nail might first bring a smart, then a pain, then a swelling, and at length end in death, most likely. Now who guides his little feet?

Each little child takes from four thousand to nine thousand such steps every day. Why don't more of the little creatures step wrong and get hurt? How many such steps in a year—in ten years! Why, we are never safe a moment. If we are on the water, the breaking of one single bolt in the ship, the breaking of one strand of the cable, the mispointing of the compass ever so little, might drown all in the great ship. Just

think what a multitude of men are walking in one city, in one army, in one country, and over the earth, every day. And yet how few step upon anything that hurts them! We should think there would be multitudes of sprained ankles, of wrenched feet, and of bruises. In the dark night it is still more wonderful. And how few are afraid to walk in the night.

The little sparrow that twitters in the rising sun, not knowing where she is to find her breakfast, gives herself no anxiety. At the right time and place she will find the little worm waiting for her. The little bee goes singing away from her hive, not knowing where she will find her sweet honey, but she gives herself no anxiety There has been a hand before her to sow the flowers, and to have their sweetness all ready at her coming. How tired the mother sometimes becomes in watching two or three little ones during the day, to see that they do not get burnt, or run over, or thrown down, or cut with a tool, or hurt otherwise. What a work if she had this to do for all the children in the world! Yet God does this every moment for all that live —seeing that the child puts down his little foot in the right place, seeing that the swift horse does not run over him, seeing that his food does not poison him, and that he shall be safe day and night. It gives me a wonderful thought of God's

greatness, just to see men walk the streets, doing it year after year, he keeping "their souls from death, their feet from falling, and their eyes from tears." None are so great that they can do without God, and none are so small as to be forgotten by him.

Ask a little boy how many fingers he has on his right hand, and he will tell you "five;" and how many on the left hand, and he says "five." Ask him how he knows, and he will tell you "it is *so easy* he can't help knowing." Yes, easy to *him;* but could a dog know how many? He says "No." Very well, this shows the boy that he knows more than the dog, because he is of a higher nature. Just so God knows how many hairs there are on every head. The reason is, his nature is so great "he can't help knowing," any more than the boy can help knowing how many fingers he has. Everything, even the walking of your feet, shows that God is everywhere, and that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

The Little Boy on Crutches.

THE snow was falling fast as we stood over the open grave, just ready to let gently down into its silence the beautiful form of a little child about three years old. All must have been struck by the pale, the very pale face of the father, and have said in their thoughts, "Poor fellow, you will soon follow her." All must have noticed the almost wild look of the mother as her child was about to be buried in the dark, cold grave. The snow lay in the bottom of the grave, and it lay white on the coffin. But did they notice a little lame boy, two years older than the little sister about to be buried, as he leaned on his small crutches over the corner of the grave, and looked so earnestly into it? He was very small, and very pale, and the first look at him showed you that he must be a cripple as long as he lived. He had lost his little sister, his playmate, the other

self. No voice had been so gentle, and no heart so loving to him as hers. He shed no tears. He stood like a marble figure upheld by crutches. But his little bosom heaved as if it would burst; and though he uttered no sound, I felt sure that he was sincerely mourning. The men unconsciously pushed him back as they finished the burial. Oh, how meekly those little crutches took him back out of the way. I felt that I wanted to take him up in my arms and weep over him. No one thought of him save the One who took little children in his arms and blessed them.

The family returned from the burial. Each one thought so much of his own grief, that the little lame boy was not thought of—as needing consolation.

But from that day the little fellow began to droop and wither. It was soon noticed that he ate but little; and in the night he might have been heard, as with a low voice he repeated over and over the little hymns that he used to repeat with his little sister. They thought it the grief of a child, and that a new book and new playthings would banish it. But the arrow had gone in too deeply to be thus drawn out. For hours he would go and sit in the little nook where he and Jessie used to play, with his chin in his thin hand, thinking, thinking. Sometimes he would

ask if Jessie could "remember now," or if she would "love him still," or if they supposed "she sang the same hymns where she was gone" which they used to sing together, or if "she would know him if she should meet him *without any crutches.*" The hymns that spoke of Jesus and his love, of heaven and its rest, of the angels and the redeemed, seemed to be his delight. Though he seldom mentioned Jessie's name, it became after a time well understood that he thought only of her. He laid aside his playthings as of no use, but would bend over her little drawer and earnestly gaze at what her tiny fingers once had handled.

Slowly and gently his life began to ebb out. He had no sickness, made no mention of pain, had no cough, and medicine could do nothing for him. When he came to take his bed, from sheer weakness, he begged that he might lie on the very bed and on the same spot where Jessie died. Sometimes in the night he would be heard to utter a suppressed moan; and when his mother hastened to him and inquired what he wanted, he would only say, "I want Jessie. Do you think she has forgotten me?" "I want to go to Jessie; and she will tell me all about it." Once, just before the angel of dismission came for him, he was heard to break out almost in a shout.

"What is it, my son?" said his mother.

"Oh, I thought Jessie had come."

"No; but, my child, you are going to Jessie. You will soon see her."

"Ah, I know. But I wish I could carry her something. And yet I know she has better things there."

The little crutches are now standing in the corner of the mother's chamber, leaning against the little bureau that held Jessie's clothes and play-things. His little hat hangs just over the crutches. The pale face is there no more. Side by side the two small graves are seen under the great hemlock-tree that tenderly spreads its shade over them. The cold winds of winter whistle over them; but where are the children? Did Jessie know him "without crutches"? Is he lame, and pale, and moaning now; or is the Good Shepherd leading them to still waters, and educating and training them up in that pure and bright world? There is no little boy on crutches looking into the grave of a sister there.

Boys—Their Mistakes.

I.

AMONG the many good things written and printed to guide ministers and rulers, fathers and mothers, and the like, I do not recollect of a good article addressed to Boys, or for their special benefit. These are not young men, nor yet children. They are boys; and I look upon them with great interest. They are soon to be young men, and then men; and the interests of the Church and of the Nation will be in their hands.

Now, my nervous, restless young friend, there is no period of life in which you are in danger of making so many mistakes as in boyhood. So sit down a few minutes and listen, while I point out to you *some* of the mistakes which you are very liable to make.

First mistake: *That parents and teachers often thwart you just because they have the power.*

You know that your parents and teachers often forbid your doing this or that, and direct you to do what you don't want to do, or what you think may just as well be put off, or that might be done in some easier way. Then you feel that you know all about it as well as they do, and better too, and so you have a right to resist and contest the thing, and certainly to grumble about it. It *seems* to you that they love to command, and make you do the very thing that you don't want to do, and so you ask, "What good will it do?" or, "Why can't I do it some other time?" or you go about it muttering and murmuring, as if greatly abused.

Now understand that this is a great mistake. The parent who will toil from early dawn till you are asleep in the evening to support you, and who will watch over you day and night when you are sick, loves you too well to lay one command on you which it is not for your good to obey. Does that parent ever bid you crush your finger in a vice, or bruise it with a hammer, or make you freeze your feet in the snow? Does the teacher ever rejoice when you are in pain, or contrive how he can make your head ache? Why, then, should it give them pleasure to hurt your feelings, or to cross your will, unless they do it for your good? I do not believe that the parent or teacher, in one case out of a thousand, ever

thwarts a boy unless he *thinks* it is for his good. To array yourself against this authority, then, is a mistake, but a very common one. I don't believe a boy ever rebels, or plays truant, or runs away from his home, without first trying to convince himself that he is right and has been abused, and that his father or teacher is a very hard-hearted creature.

Perhaps you will say, "I would honour my father and my mother if they were only rich, so that we could have everything we want, and if they were educated and refined—a real gentleman and a real lady; but how can I honour one who is poor and uneducated, and not refined and respected, and who is at times impatient and fretful, and sometimes even violent and passionate?" My dear boy, God knew there would be just such parents, and he knew how hard it would be to respect and honour such; and so he has provided for it in two ways: first by laying his own command upon us, and secondly by promising us a special reward: "Thy days shall be long," —the first and last command with a promise. Honour thy father and thy mother because they are thy parents; and though they may make mistakes sometimes, they mean to seek only your good.

Second mistake: *That anything vulgar or sinful can be manly.*

Boys sometimes, perhaps often, get the notion

that it is manly for a boy to smoke, or to use tobacco, because men, and respectable men, do it; that to use profane or vulgar or obscene language is manly; that to be irreverent and low in speech is manly, because men are so at times. A sad mistake, I assure you. If such men are allowed in good society, it is in *spite* of these things, and not in consequence of them. I have never seen a father who, as I thought, really wanted to have his boy learn to smoke, or to be vulgar or profane; and what would you think of a father who every morning at family worship should pray that his son might that day learn one more vulgar expression, learn to use one more intense oath, or might learn to blaspheme the name of God with new glibness? Now, is it right to *do* anything for which we may not pray? And what would your mother say if in the morning she should find her boy kneeling down and praying God to help him to be more profane, or to use viler language than ever before? And yet you know that many a boy will use language and oaths and vile speech during the day, on which he dares not think when he meets God alone in the dark. Know then, my boy, that if you think that anything that is low or vulgar, or such as you would not want to say or do before your mother or sister, is manly, you are mistaken. "Sin is a reproach to any people," and to none more so than to young people. And

as to those low, vile men, who would teach you vile things and encourage you to be vulgar or profane, shun them as you would demons from the bottomless pit.

Third mistake: *That you can break off bad habits any time you please.*

You will often meet with boys who boast that they are not tied by bad habits; that at any time they please they can stop doing this or that; they can stop having wicked thoughts whenever they please; stop using profane language, and have the imagination and words all pure whenever they please: but let them *try*, and then see. The fact is, they won't "please," and they won't try to do it. You might just as well dip your hands in tar and keep it on them a month, and then say, "Oh, I can wash it all off in a moment, whenever I please." You might just as well swallow poison and say, "I can throw it all out of my system any moment I please." What would you think of a boy who should play with a mad dog or a rattlesnake under the belief that he could expel the poison of its bite at any moment? No. Sin is like pitch; it will stick to you. It is like poison; it will not go out at your bidding. Many a boy drinks this poison through a vile book, a vile picture, or a vile companion, till his soul is defiled, his imagination is polluted, and made a den of unclean things and a rendez-

vous of unclean spirits all the rest of his life. All the waters of the Nile could not wash such a heart clean. No boy can conceive what shame, what bondage, what remorse and misery he is laying up for himself even in this life, by early or secret indulgence in sin. These sins are like little ropes, but they drag you into the bottomless pit. The waters of Jordan once cleansed one leper, and that was a miracle; but no water can make your soul pure when once polluted. It is easy to learn to sin, but to break away from it when once learned is almost superhuman.

My dear boy, there are *five* more mistakes which I want you to consider, and they will form the subject of another article.

II.

Carrying on the thoughts above suggested, I remark upon other mistakes which boys make.

Fourth mistake: *That study is unhealthy.*

Boys sometimes want to convince themselves and others that they need not go to school, or may neglect to apply themselves when at school, because study hurts them. Now the Bible—and that is full of truth and common sense—says that "much study is a *weariness* to the flesh," but it never says it is unhealthy. Why, you have so many mornings and nights to play, so many half-days and so many vacations, that you are in no

very great danger of hurting yourself with study. The little delicate girl, with her gentle organization, may injure herself by study, though even she is far more likely to do it by reading sickly novels; but you—the stout, laughing boy—you are in no danger.

But I will tell you what will hurt you much more than study, and that is reading those vulgar yellow-covered novels and romances, that kindle your passions and set your brain on fire. These weaken the mind, scatter the thoughts, and bring you into a state which makes study become hurtful. It is a fact that this kind of reading is doing more hurt in our public schools than all the study in the world. You might just as well spend so many hours every day in a hot bath and expect to grow strong, as to spend your time in *this* reading and not grow weak in mind. It does not hurt the mind to stretch it and make it think; but it does hurt it to pour such trash into it. The hard student is more likely to be a long-lived man than others; and for a boy to waste his school-days and neglect to prepare his mind for future life under the plea that study will hurt his health, is a mistake so great that it can never in after life be corrected.

Fifth mistake: *That boyhood is an excuse for sin.*

Sometimes when boys are rude, turbulent, un-

clean, and profane—outwardly vile—it is said, "Oh, they are only boys; they don't think how it seems;" or, "They are only sowing their wild oats now, they will be better by-and-by." But where does God give you permission to give your beautiful boyhood to sin? Where does he tell us we shall outgrow sin? Where does he tell us that he loves to have us give the dew of our youth to the service of the devil? Is it such a precious privilege to sin, that you must claim it while a boy? Is it something so very desirable, that you claim the privilege of being wicked because you are a boy? Suppose you have lived but a few years, is that a reason why you should be wicked? Suppose a newly created angel should say, "I am an angel, and therefore I want to spend the first part of my life in being profane and rude and vile;" would God excuse him? Now bear in mind that God will not hold any one guiltless when he sins, whether he is young or old. Does not a worm-bite look bad on the red, downy side of the peach? So does sin look on the young. *Men* have great outside temptations to be wicked; but when a *boy* is wicked, we know it all comes from his vile heart within. In boyhood, too, you are sowing the seed of what is to grow and grow as long as you live. It is the seed-time of life, and a terrible harvest often grows up from seed sown in early life! I have never met a wicked

man who did not begin to be wicked while young. Ask your parents if they have not found it so.

Sixth mistake: *That bad company will not hurt boys.*

I was once called to see a person dying with the small-pox, and to pray with her. I took every precaution to prevent bringing the disease into my family. I had been vaccinated when a little boy, and therefore felt pretty safe; but after all, for days I had to suffer and to feel many of the pains and dangers of the disease. But suppose I had *not* been vaccinated, and had *not* been thoroughly prepared, the result would have been that I should have taken the disease, and most probably have lost my life. Now, it is just as impossible for a boy to go into bad company without being injured, as it would be to be exposed to the small-pox without danger. The Bible compares such company to pitch. It will stick. There are boys in almost every street with whom no good, pure boy ought ever to associate. They are teachers of iniquity. You already know their names and faces. "But what shall I do?" say you. What would you do if you saw a mad dog in the streets? Would you go and play with him, or keep as far from him as possible? What would you do if you saw an enraged bull making towards you? Run from him, would you not? But what

if *you* are one of those wicked, corrupting boys—then what? Then be ashamed of yourself. Feel what a vile fellow you are, when every mother and sister in the street shudders at your name, and dreads you as she would a plague. Humble yourself before God, and ask him to make you a better boy, and not let you become a curse to yourself and a curse to all around you.

Seventh mistake: *That it depends on others, and not on yourself, what your character will be.*

Boys are very apt to think that if they only had rich parents, great advantages, and distinguished friends to help them, they should do well—should study and learn, be industrious, and become valuable men; whereas it depends mainly on the boy himself what he is, and what he shall become. Almost every boy may have any character he pleases. He may become a merchant, a physician, a lawyer, or a minister of the gospel, if he chooses. And there is no boy whom all the money and all the friends in the world can help, if he is not true to himself. *Not all the lifting in the world can help a boy to climb a tree, if he will not take hold and pull himself up.* You must wash your own face if it is to be kept clean. It depends much on yourself what you shall be, both in this life and in the next.

Eighth mistake: *That religion was not made for boys.*

This is the greatest mistake any boy ever made. He may think that religion is suitable for his mother, and perhaps for his elder sister; but for a *boy*—one who feels so lively, and is so unlikely to die, who is so manly, and so wise—what can *he* want with religion? I will tell you, the oldest man you know will tell you, that it took all the experience of his life to make him humble; the wisest man you know will tell you that he is very far from being wise; and the holiest man will tell you that he feels anything but holy; and they *all* tell you that you are a child, and need some one to guide you; that you have strong passions, and need some one to calm you. You have no experience, and are liable to make a thousand mistakes; you have a wicked heart, and need some one to make you good. You want to live, and who but God can keep you alive? You want health, and who but the great Physician can keep you well? You want to grow up a man of whom your parents will be proud, whom all will respect, whose influence shall be great and good; you want to be useful in this world, and you want to be happy for ever. Can you take a single step towards even one of these points without religion?

Let a boy make up his mind to begin life without God, and very likely God will let him have his chosen way. There is no class in the whole community that would be so much aided by reli-

gion as boys; none upon whom it rests more beautifully, and none whom it can fit for so much usefulness. *I would rather a boy were a child of God than the son of a king.* The moment you join yourself to God, your whole nature is ennobled; your powers acquire new strength, and your heart new and glorious aims. The boy who reads these lines to-day may hereafter be a noble man, in some profession, in some station in which he can be a great blessing while he lives.

My dear boy, do you *want* to be respectable and useful and good; or do you want to grow up a curse to yourself, a woe to your friends, a disgrace to your town,—a blighted, ruined spirit, lost for ever, to sob and wail to eternity? God says to you to-day, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Till you are a Christian, nothing is really done for you; when you are, "all things are yours."

The Top of the Hill.

IT seemed as if I never had seen the landscape look more beautiful under the soft haze of the Indian summer, with the tints of autumn still lingering on the forest-trees, as my friend asked me to go with him to the top of a hill. The mountains rose high in the west, while here and there, on the hill and in the valley, the clump of trees or the solitary elm gave variety and beauty. The eye took in a wide sweep. A multitude of sheep seemed to be the sole tenants of the region, except when the squirrel uttered his little bark from a tree stump or a heap of stones.

"You see this beautiful region?" said my friend.

"Yes, and I greatly admire it; but I am surprised to see no houses near. I see here and there a very old, rickety barn, and a solitary chimney where a house must have stood; but *not a house* in sight. What does it all mean?"

"It means that men and women and children have passed away, to make room for sheep. You notice the immense flocks of sheep around us. To raise sheep requires a large range of pasture, and so one little farm after another has been swallowed up by the rich man, till the people have all gone —emigrated. On that spot where you see that foundation, near the big butternut-tree, once stood our little red schoolhouse, with thirty scholars. This was once a school district, and families enough lived here to make a good district; now there is not one left: they are scattered all over the land. Every house has been pulled down, and few remember the people that once nestled in these beautiful nooks; but for myself, I never come here without coming up to the top of this hill, and thinking over the past, and recalling the names and faces of my schoolmates. You must know that I graduated in that college."

"So the old school had a mission, and did a work in its day."

"Truly you may say so. I am amazed as I look back to see the amount of character raised up in that school-house. Down yonder, under the hill, stood an old tumble-down house. Out of that house came a rough, tough, good-natured boy, up to all kinds of mischief, yet never doing any great wrong. He would skate nearer the hole in the river than any other boy; would run his sled

down the hill over stones and walls where any other boy would be likely to break his neck. He is now commander of an East India ship; a pious, great-fisted, and great-hearted fellow. Over that hill, near the brook, stood a small house in which lived a poor widow. She had one child, a white-haired boy. He was a quiet little fellow, the friend of everybody; often abused by the big boys, but always cheerful and happy. The poor mother strained every nerve, chopped her own wood, and even took in washing, to educate her boy; and she lived to see him graduate, the first scholar in his class, and to take a position in the ministry gratifying to any ambition. Near that great heap of stones stood a house out of which came up a boy who is now at the head of all the merchants in a great city, widely known for his honest, down-right integrity, for his intelligence and benevolence. At the left grew up a boy wild as the fern on the hill-side, but generous and noble in nature. He is now a member of Congress. His younger brother is an eminent Christian lawyer. So I might call up others who were born and trained up in this humble school district, and who have been an ornament to their generation."

"Yes, my good friend; but you have not numbered yourself among them, when you might have added, 'One of the most distinguished surgeons *of the day.*'"

"Well, well—we will drop the surgeon. But you see what a mission this school-house has had, and how character may be born in humble stations, and the very nobility of our nature may come from these lowly places. OH, THE BOYS OF OUR COUNTRY! LET THEM BE TRUE TO THEMSELVES, AND THEY WILL DO GREAT THINGS FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THEIR GENERATION."

An Uncommon Mother.

AT the gateway of one of our beautiful rural cemeteries, a large funeral was just entering, and our attention was called to a very remarkable sight. The bier was resting on the shoulders of four tall, noble-looking men, in the prime of life. One of these bearers was a judge on the bench of the Supreme Court of the nation; a second was one of the most eminent and accomplished lawyers whom this country or any other can boast; a third was a very distinguished divine, whose pen is a great power; and the fourth was the president of the Senate of his State. And these remarkable men were all brothers! They stood strong in life, but were bowed and silent and solemn, as if the bier were too heavy for their strength. Very slowly and carefully they trod, as if the sleeper should not feel the motion.

And who was on the bier, so carefully and tenderly borne? *It was their own mother.* Never did I see a grief more reverent or respect more profound. It seemed to me that the mother's cold heart must also throb in the coffin. A nobler sight, or a more beautiful tribute of love, I never saw. They were all, doubtless, going back in memory to their early childhood, and to the loving care of this best of all earthly friends. They well knew that they, the sons of a village pastor, could never have been trained and educated and fitted to occupy their stations without a very extraordinary mother. They well knew that they owed more to her than to all other human agencies. No shoulders but theirs must bear the precious dust to the grave-yard; no hands but theirs must deposit it in its last resting-place.

That body had been inhabited by one of the sweetest, most cheerful and brilliant minds, that ever inhabited an earthly tabernacle. It had long, too, been the temple of the Holy Ghost. What that lovely woman had done to make her husband's ministry useful and profitable; what she had done in training daughters that are ornaments to their sex; what she had done to make these distinguished men what they are, who can tell? What has not a mother accomplished who has given such an influence to the world? I never see one of these sons but my thoughts go back

to the home of their childhood; and I can hardly keep my eyes from filling with tears as I think of that mother. How many men start upon the stage of life, and feel they are great and are filling great spheres of usefulness, who are really dwarfs in comparison with such a character! When that mother went down to the very brink of the grave that she might bring up life, as her children were born,—when she toiled unseen and unpraised through all their training,—what an influence was she preparing to leave upon the world after she should be numbered with the dead! We may develop ourselves, and think we have done well if we can achieve anything in life; but, most likely, if anything valuable in us is developed, we owe it chiefly to our patient, meek, unnoticed mother. She forms the character which we develop. And in too many cases it is our ignorance of the laws of influence that prevents the mother from receiving that love and respect she deserves.

Heaven will be just where we are not, and I can find no words in which to express my appreciation of such a friend. Some few who have early lost their mother, through death or the loss of reason, come out useful and respectable men; but they would probably have been much more so, had they enjoyed her love and care. They may well mourn the loss all their days. The

names of the mothers of Moses, of Samuel, of Timothy, and other eminent men, are recorded; and so are the names of the mothers of the wicked kings generally recorded, as if to tie them to the disgrace of their sons.

O mother! amid all your anxieties and labours, be assured that the time is coming when your name and image will fill the chambers of the memories of your children as no other can. You are garnering up love, respect, and veneration, which will gather around your coffin, if not around your dwelling. You will grow in the hearts of your children as long as they live.

O son of the good mother! remember that she hath spared nothing that the human heart could yield for thy good. Let thy love and gratitude and reverence flow back upon her; and if her hair is becoming silvered with age, remember that thy opportunities to minister to her comfort are every day becoming fewer and fewer. God help thee to cheer her.

The Arms of Love.

THERE is something very beautiful in the love between a father and a daughter; —the one throwing the strong arm of manhood around the frail little one; and she, like an ivy, clinging to him with a confidence that never doubts. For many weeks I noticed that on a certain day and hour a poor man passed my door, tenderly bearing in his arms his little daughter, about eight or nine years old. He carried her from the station to the medical college, near or quite three quarters of a mile, and in about an hour he carried her back again. So he must carry her, I know not how far, to and from the cars. How tenderly he embraces her, and how confidingly she throws her arms around his neck! Who are they?

This poor child, some months ago, hurt her leg by a fall, as was supposed. Her parents were too ignorant of wounds or sickness to know what to

do, till the leg became so bad that they feared she must lose it.

Now in this medical college there is a time set apart twice a week, called a "*Clinique*," when the poor and suffering may come and receive the best medical advice free of all expense; and it is astonishing how many gladly avail themselves of these opportunities. When the surgeons came to examine this poor child, they found her in a very bad condition. So they gave her something to smell, which put her into a sleep so sound that she knew nothing of what they were doing. While asleep, they opened the leg, and found the bone dead and loose, as if it had been a hard, dry stick in the flesh, irritating it and making it sore. So they took out the whole of the dead bone, and very carefully bound up the wound, and sent her home. It is to have this leg examined and dressed that her poor father thus carries her every week. He is too poor to hire a carriage. They don't talk as they pass along, but I can see that they understand each other.

And what is to be the result? The surgeons could take out the old bone, but could they put in a new one? No, nothing like it. But there comes to the bedside of that child an unseen Physician who works over the limb, and puts in, little by little, what is becoming a new bone. A new bone is actually growing where the old one

was; and in a few months, it is thought, the child will have the leg all mended, and be able to run about as she used to do. What a wonderful Physician is that! How *can* he put in, particle by particle, atom after atom, of soft matter, carried there and left in just the right spot, and then make it harden and turn into bone? What a wonderful Physician!

How good is the Lord. Under no religion but that of Christ has the surgeon and the physician so much skill. It was foretold that "the lame should leap as an hart," and it comes to pass every day. The mind and the skill of the surgeon must all come from God. It is borrowed from him. How wonderful, too, that the highest skill in the world is thus at the command of the poor, "without money, and without price." The gospel creates this benevolence too. None but Christian lands produce such charities for the poor. And how good is the Lord in implanting such a love in the heart of the parent; so that the more helpless his child is, the more he loves her; and the more she suffers, the more he will do for her. He does not feel his arms ache as he carries her. He does not think of himself at all. His child fills his heart; he only thinks of having his child made whole.

Ah, yes; and the Physician of whom I speak can do more than all this. He can "take away

the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh." How he does it we know not, any more than we know how the new bone in this child's leg is to grow. Truly he may well be called "the Great Physician." Our surgeons do their best for the poor child without fee or reward; and so does He give his skill and services without money or reward. There are some cases brought to these physicians which they cannot cure, but none are brought to Him so bad that he cannot cure them. This "Clinique" is open to the poor only on certain days; but He ever stands at the door, and you may knock and he will open it. This little one may pass out of the surgeon's mind till she comes again; but out of the thoughts of the Great Physician the sick one never is absent a moment. O blessed One! This Divine Helper takes our infirmities and bears our sicknesses, and is never weary with bearing them. Will you not carry your wounded spirit to him for Divine healing?

The First Funeral in the New House.

THE new house was built on the spot where the old one had stood. The old house was of wood, nearly a hundred years old. It had been the place of births, sicknesses, weddings, and funerals. It had been the home of large families, all now numbered with the dead. The history of the joys and the sorrows, the mirth and the tears witnessed there, will never be written. The new house was built of hewn stone, very hard to the chisel, and very beautiful. It is very large, and everything that money could procure was used to make it a noble though plain building. You cannot suggest an improvement. It seems as if it must stand till the end of the world. Its huge, thick doors, and its plate-glass windows, seem to be able to shut out any foe and defend from any danger.

When the family moved in, friends called to

congratulate and admire. The family was large and very healthy. Hospitality reigned there, and many were the friends from far and near who were made welcome. It seemed a very perfect earthly home. Nobody ever accused the family of being vain of their house.

But suddenly, when the heavens were bright and not a cloud was to be seen, a dark shadow was thrown over that house. There was a messenger sent to that home whom no thick doors could shut out. He rang no bell, knocked at no door, but went straight in to do his errand. He uttered no words, showed no form to the eye, let no footstep fall on the floor, and asked no questions—such as, "Are they ready?" "Are they willing?" Straight to the beautiful child that lay in his mother's arms he went, and touched it. The little one rolled its eyes, a shadow passed over its face, like the wind over the water, and it gasped once or twice, and it was cold as the grave, white as marble, and nothing but the dead casket of the soul was left to the family. The sobs of the father, the wail of the mother, and the loud grief of the children, fell unheeded on the ear of the dead child. And this was the first death in that house. And thus was this splendid mansion turned, for the time being, into a tomb. We can't look at the house as we did. We feel that it is marked, and a

process has there commenced that is to be repeated again and again. Who will be next, or how many during the first century, or how many before these walls will crumble down will go from that spot to give an account for all the deeds done here in the body, who can tell? But to me there never can be a funeral so solemn under that roof as the first.

Who and what characters are yet to come out of that dwelling? Will it send forth young hearts beating with love to Christ—missionaries of the Cross, or true and faithful ministers? Will it be the school of Christ, where his disciples will be trained up for his service and glory? What a history of all the families that will ever live in that house will be given at the last, great day!

But wisely all this is concealed from us, while we do know that every sorrow that shall grow up there, every disappointment that shall be felt there, and every death that shall take place there, may become a blessing, and fit these successive families for the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

I am surprised at times to see how short the time is, that a house can stand after being built, before this fearful messenger shall find it; and I think my reader would also be astonished to be told. I wonder if Death, as he passes our streets, knows when he is to call on this or that family,

and can point his finger at every house and say, "I know when."

But there is a bright side to this dark picture. The first man whom Death struck down on this Earth was a "righteous" man, and undoubtedly he was saved by his faith. The little one who first passed from the new house into eternity, we trust was one who will be a jewel in the crown of Christ for ever. It went to a more beautiful home, to a more perfect education. And who can doubt, if that strong dwelling shall stand for centuries, that there will be many trained up there for the presence of Christ? It is not then, in this light, a great tomb, but a beautiful porch at the gate of Heaven. Perhaps for ages the angels will mark this house as the place where they come and garner up the precious things of earth which were bought with the blood of the Lamb. There were "churches" in the private houses of the early Christians. Will not the time yet come again when the loving heart may send greetings to "the church which is in thy house"?

The new house is beautiful to me; not because its architecture is so costly and perfect, nor because its furniture is so splendid, nor because it is every way so perfect in arrangement, but because I have attended the first funeral there, and feel sure that one dear, precious child, has gone from that home to his home in the skies. Men as they pass by

may not know, or they may forget, that there ever was a funeral in that dwelling, but I never shall. I look upon it as the place where a beautiful little jewel was prepared for the diadem of the Redeemer; and I earnestly pray that every one in the family may be saved in consequence of the first funeral in the new house.

Talk at the Waterfall.

E were standing in a deep gorge between two very high mountains. It was a very hot day on the plain, but when we reached this gorge it was cold almost to chilliness. There was quite a mountain stream, that came roaring through the ravine, rushing among the rocks, now leaping over huge stones, foaming, heaving, whirling, and scattering its spray far and near. Just before us the stream seemed to be cooped up, as if its progress were to be stopped; when suddenly it gathered force, and leaped down a precipice, making the very earth tremble with its fall.

"Beautiful," said my young friend, "beautiful; but after all I am wondering for what purpose it was made. Only one man in six months, it may be, sees it, and he may not have taste enough to admire it. Do you suppose it was made to foam and roar here only for the eye of man?"

"By no means; but it was made for the *lungs* of men, and of men too who never saw it or heard of it."

"Please explain yourself."

"Well, I'll try. These great huge mountains are in part all for the same purpose."

"I don't begin to understand you, sir."

"Don't you remember what horrid smells we had as we came out of the great city?"

"Indeed I do. I had to hold my nose for a time."

"And in the roads and over the plains what clouds of dust we had?"

"Yes, I was almost choked."

"Well, every city, every factory, every dead thing, animal or vegetable, is constantly sending up what corrupts the air we breathe. Every furnace and coal-pit, and every chimney in the land and in the world, adds to the impurity of the air. How long could you breathe holding your face over the top of a chimney or in the thick smoke of a coal-pit? Then the decay of animals and of all the vegetable world, as you know, produces fevers, plague, cholera, and other fearful diseases, by corrupting the air. What sicknesses we sometimes have in the decay of autumn! Now this air has to be constantly in a process of purification, else it will kill everybody."

"Well, so far is very plain; but what has that to do with this dark, unknown waterfall?"

"Be patient and you shall know. God knew that we must breathe every moment, and that we must have pure air; hence it is that he is at work everywhere to do this. With the spray and the waters of the ocean he begins to wash it. As the vapours rise up in the air, and are gathered in the clouds and whirled around everywhere by the wind, the air is washed, and every drop of rain does its part in this work. Then God rolls it over and over again and again, tossing and dashing it between heaven and earth by every storm. Certain parts of its impurities he lets rise up in the clouds, and then burns them up with lightning. Don't you know how much purer and sweeter the air is after a thunder-storm? He drives this air through the great forest, and every tree and leaf is a kind of strainer, which takes out some of its impurities. Then these mountains and gorges—they cause the air to traverse up and down their sides, to roll down, sucked through every gorge, moistened by every spray and leap of the brook, whirled along by every torrent, beat and pounded by every waterfall, cooled in caves and corners where the sunbeams never fall, and then sent out over the plains where men live, all purified and fitted for their lungs. By-and-by it will come back again to be bruised and shaken, to creep

over the bare heads of these mountains, to be pierced by the darts which the lightnings send through them, to be rolled and tossed like hay in the field, all over these mountains and forests. And this is what that foaming waterfall and thousands more like it are doing. They are churning and purifying the air that we breathe. The babe in the narrow street of the great city, and the dweller in the house on the great prairie, may both be the better for this very gorge and mountain torrent. The snows also that gently fall through the air are a great purifier. They wash it. Have you never seen the snow almost dark with impurities brought down with it out of the air?"

"I see, I see; and I wonder I never saw all this before. I understand too the words of the psalmist, and how 'fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind, mountains and all hills, fulfil his word,' and aid in the great plans of his mercy; and I don't wonder the holy man exclaimed, 'O God, in wisdom hast thou made them all.'"

Under the Lake.

E were at Chicago, where people were then making a contrivance by which to draw water—pure, cold, and nice—from the bottom of the lake. They formed the plan carefully, after many soundings and borings in the lake. Then they made what I would call a great crib, and floated it off two miles, and sank it by filling it with stones—I dare not say how many tons. The bottom of the lake is hard, blue clay; so into and through this clay, down, down, sixty feet, they began to dig.

There was a huge steam-engine, a very strong fellow, who cheerfully lifted up any weight they put on him. As the engineer was going down to the tunnel, by great good luck and his great politeness, we, two ministers and a friend, got an invitation to go down with him.

The reader must know that as fast as they dig

the tunnel the clay is trundled to the opening, and then the little cars are lifted up about seventy feet, and emptied. The clay is then burned into brick, carried back, and goes to make the tunnel.

And now in the dirt and clay you are rigged out in old coats and hats, some too large and some too small, till you laugh at one another with great heartiness. You then get into the little car, crouching and twisting up your legs, and occupying the smallest possible space. The car holds the engineer, two visitors, and one workman. Two little smoking lamps intimate that you are going into darkness. Word is now given, "Lower away," and you begin to descend into thick darkness. "The saints are going down," cries a rogue at the mouth of the hole. You look up, and can just see the light above.

And now your car is down, and resting on a narrow railroad track. You are in the tunnel, which is a round arch, or complete circle, five feet and two inches in diameter, or from side to side straight across. Now move if you dare, for the man behind begins to push the car. On, on you go, making the air to rush past you. Be careful, and not lift your head an inch, or it will be scraped! On the right hand, as you go in, you notice the feet are marked on the brick,—ten, twenty, &c., up to a hundred; and then it begins again. On, on you go, just like dreaming, seem-

ing to make no progress. And now you begin to feel that you are under the lake—fairly under it. People talk about the tunnel under the Thames at London as a mighty work. It is really a little over twelve hundred feet long. We went over three thousand feet under the mighty lake, and only three-eighths of it is yet dug! At every thousand feet there is a sort of chamber where the cars can stop, and where on each side the workmen may leave their tools.

At the farther end you are three quarters of a mile under the lake. But it is bricked and arched up until you get within about ten feet of the end, where the workmen are digging. That ten feet has no support but the clay. You can now hear the paddles of the steamboat, as she crosses over your head. What if that clay should break or give way! What if the great lake should come rushing down upon you! How long would it take to fill the great tunnel? What a tomb would it be!

You now take the pickaxe and dig a little, just to feel that you "have had a hand in it," and have "helped to dig the great tunnel" at Chicago. On the right as you go in you notice a black-looking tin pipe, about the size of a common stove-pipe, only flattened so as not to take up much room. This pipe is open at the end where the workmen are, and its use is to carry off the bad

air which fills the tunnel. But how do they get good air to breathe? Hark! don't you hear a whirring, buzzing noise, as if a thousand partridges had been scared up? That is the bellows which our friend the steam-engine uses with which to blow fresh air down the shaft, and keep the tunnel full all the time. So you see that while he forces new and pure air down and into this dark region, he sucks out the bad air through the tin pipe already described.

Two feet a day they advance, working day and night, and in a little more than a year they expect to have it done; and then the great engine will still force the water up high enough to run in pipes all over the great city. What a gigantic work! What an idea it gives one of what mind and skill and civilization can do. And this huge work, all completed and filled with water, tapping the lake full two miles off, all complete, lay in the mind of the engineer before he began to lift a tool! And just so all things, visible and invisible, lay in the mind of the Great Architect before he created a single thing; only he made them all from nothing.

What a singular plan by which to supply a great city with unfailing pure and cool water. Does it not make one think of that more wonderful plan by which the waters of life are made to flow to every man's door—cool, pure, refreshing,

abundant for the wants, not of a city merely, but of a world? "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

"All for Ten Cents."

"ALL for ten cents! all for ten cents!" I heard a voice proclaiming. It was at the railway station, at the close of a cold, rainy, dreary day, and I was just taking the cars, expecting to go three hundred miles during the night.

"All for ten cents, sir!" repeated the same voice. Soon there came along a nimble, smart, dapper, whisking little fellow, offering to sell the tickets of a new kind of insurance company, who engage to insure your life for the night, and for the three hundred miles, to the amount of five thousand dollars, and "all for ten cents;" that is, on paying ten cents for my ticket I was to secure five thousand dollars in the event of being killed.

Now I knew some things perfectly well. I knew the night was to be long and very dark; that we were to go not less than twenty-five or thirty miles every hour, counting stoppages; I

knew I was liable to be killed should a bridge break down, should the wind blow down a tree on the track, should one of the wheels of my car break, should we meet another train by mistake on our track, should some careless fellow turn a switch wrong, should some evil-minded person put obstacles on the rails, should some thoughtless cow lie down in our path; in short, I could think over a great multitude of things that *might* occur, any one of which might cost me my life. I knew, too, that the five thousand dollars would be a very convenient little circumstance to my family, in case I should get killed that night. And yet, strange though it may seem, I did not purchase the insurance. And why not? The sum certainly was a very small one—"all for ten cents."

"Perhaps," say you, "you had no confidence in the company offering to insure."

"I did not think of that question. If I had known it to be the best company in the world the result would have been the same."

"Perhaps you think the system of insurance wrong."

"By no means. If honestly conducted, it is a very valuable aid to civilized society."

"What then *was* the reason?"

To tell the truth, I had such confidence in the care and protection of God, that I did not feel

that it was worth ten cents to be insured. And what an amazing result is that to which this leads us. Probably in that long train of cars there were not a dozen who would pay the ten cents to have their lives insured. And that not because many of them thought of God and his care and protection, but they knew that *something* had so far kept them safe; that they had ridden in cars, in steamboats, and in coaches, by day and by night, scores of times, and had never yet come to any harm. What a wonderful care and protection of our heavenly Father is it, that we would not any day or night be willing to pay ten cents to have our life insured! And who does not see that this is not presumption, but a proper result of our experience? So that every day and every night God keeps for us that which men, at the very lowest estimate, call worth five thousand dollars.

"How *can* they afford to insure life so cheap?" says one. I reply, that every railroad in the land can afford, for ten cents on a passenger, to issue a ticket obligating itself to pay five thousand dollars for every one killed. Take one railroad which I have in my mind. They run only six trains daily each way, averaging, I suppose, four hundred for each train, which is four thousand eight hundred passengers daily; which is twenty-eight thousand eight hundred weekly, counting

six days in the week; which is nearly one million and a half annually, and which, at ten cents each, would give the railroad 149,760 dollars. What railroad would not jump at the chance thus to insure, when often they lose not a life in a whole year?

But I took my pen, not to contrive how to enrich railroads, but to show how wonderfully the providence of God protects us, and how we rely upon it, even when we make no acknowledgment and express no gratitude. How few would be willing to part with that which God daily gives them for twice five thousand dollars, who nevertheless are not ready to bless him for all this. It was not because the passengers esteemed their lives of so little value, that they neglected to be insured, but because they had so much confidence in the common providence of God that they felt that they were safe. Oh, how great is the goodness of our heavenly Father! Can you not, and will you not, love this kind Protector, this more than kind Friend—the very Redeemer of your soul?

A Strange Stranger.

SUPPOSE a child or a grown-up man or woman could meet himself in the street, would he know himself? I reply, No; not his own face or person. The experiment has often been tried. In a certain shop, the new proprietors fitted up at the farther end a very large mirror. It reflected the full figure of every one in the room. An old gentleman who was deaf, and who had not heard of the great mirror, went into the shop. As he advanced he noticed another old gentleman coming to meet him. Belonging to "the old school" in politeness, he bows to the stranger, and the stranger bows to him. He stretches out his hand, as if to shake hands; and so does the stranger. "Sir," said he, "you have the advantage of me. You seem to know me; but I can't recall your name, though it seems as if I had seen you before. Please to speak louder, sir, for my hearing is much impaired."

By this time the clerks were too full to hold in, and broke out in a laugh. The whole thing then flashed upon him, and he enjoyed the mistake as much as any of them. Let any one go into a room lighted by the moon only, and pass by a mirror, and he will start at seeing an unknown form moving in the room, not recognizing his own face. I once knew a very polite old gentleman of the olden time, who was at a large dinner party. At the call to the table in a distant room, he was naturally expected to take the lead; but as he was leaving the room he saw another old gentleman, who ought, as he thought, to have the precedence. Accordingly he paused and bowed, and tried hard to get the stranger to advance first. The company were too polite to shout, but they could scarcely refrain themselves. The panels of the doors were mirrors, and he was bowing to his own image.

It may seem strange that a man who has seen his own face in the glass daily for half a century should not know it when he unexpectedly meets it; but so it is. Men forget their own children in a few years. Suppose a man should find a great basket by the wayside, carefully packed, and on opening it he should find it filled with *human thoughts*—all the thoughts which had passed through one single brain in one year, or in five years—what a medley they would make!

How many would be wild and foolish; how many weak and contemptible; how many mean and vile; how many so contradictory and crooked that they could hardly lie still in the basket! And suppose he should be told that these were all his own thoughts—children of his own brain—how amazed would he be; how little prepared to see himself as revealed in those thoughts. And how would he want to run away and hide, if all the world were to see the basket opened and see his thoughts.

Suppose a messenger from God should take us by the hand and lead us up the steps of a great building, and as we entered the porch it should begin to grow dark. Suppose that he should then open a door into a very large hall, which he called a "picture-gallery." As we enter it we find it dark as night; but as the angel touches a spring, the light flashes in and fills the room. We now see that the walls are hung with pictures—so many and so large that they cover all the walls. On these are painted all the sins that we have ever committed! On one picture are painted all the bad words we have ever spoken; on another, all the crimes and jealousies we have ever felt; on another, all the covetings of our hearts; on others, all the wrong bargains we have ever made—all the unkindness to our parents and friends of which we have ever been guilty—all our prayer-

less mornings and evenings—all our neglect of God's Word—all our ingratitude towards our heavenly Father, and our hard feelings towards him—all our abuse of the Sabbath and the means of grace—all our neglect of the Saviour, and our grieving away the Holy Spirit. What pictures would our sins—open sins, secret sins, heart sins, and life-long sins—make! Who would dare to look at them? What a terrible hall would that be! It would truly be a "judgment-hall." I don't suppose we should at once recognize all these pictures to be ours; but they would make us tremble.

We have to meet ourselves at the Great Day, and see all the thoughts of our life, as if laid together in a basket; and we have to meet all our sins, as if each one were painted in colours that will never fade; and how much, oh! how much shall we need the blessed Saviour to take these bodies and make them "like unto his own glorious body;" and to take these thoughts and "cover them" up for ever; and to take these sins, all painted so clearly, and "blot them out" for ever. Oh, Divine Hand, what a work will this blotting out of the sins of all thy redeemed be!

The Musk-Rat in the Canal.

THE musk-rat had his home in the great canal. He might travel a hundred miles either way and find the same still waters. He lived in a wild place far from any house or city, and nothing disturbed him except the boats that came along, day and night, continually. But as he came out of his hole only in the night, and as the path for the horses that drew the boats was on the other side of the canal, and as every boat had a light at her bow, which he could see afar off, the boats did not trouble him much. He swam in the canal, or he crept up its bank and went to the fields for food, and was as well off as any musk-rat ought to desire; but like many men who have a fulness, he began to grow lazy.

"Now," said he, as he sat perched upon the bank of the canal one pleasant night, "now this canal was evidently built for us musk-rats; but

what a shame to make the banks so high and so steep. How I have to tug my grass and clover up this high bank; and how it puts me out of breath and makes me pant. Those stupid things called *men* do, to be sure, use the canal to move their boats on; but it is perfectly plain that it was made for us noble and wise musk-rats. Now a thought has come into my head,—a very wise thought. Instead of creeping up and down this high bank, I will dig a hole through it, down at the bottom, and then I can run in and out just when I please. Won't that be worth while? Who but a musk-rat would ever have thought of that?"

Plunge! and down he goes, and begins to dig. All night and all the next day he toiled, when he opened a little hole through the bank. The water followed him, which in vain he tried to kick back with his feet. Dig, dig, a little more. There, pop he goes through; and rush, rush comes the water, tearing, ripping, and foaming after him. It whirls and surges and rushes and sweeps the poor musk-rat away, and jams him between two rails of the fence, where he lies dead. Rush, rush; the bank gives way, the water all runs out, and hundreds of boats are left in the mud at the bottom of the canal—all in a few hours.

Now for some of the results. The wise, lazy, and vain rat lost his life, which is hardly worth mentioning. Then there was a loss of property

in consequence of the delay to repair the breach, which amounted to at least *fifty thousand dollars*. There were hundreds of barrels of apples and fruit lost by decay. There were ships at the wharves waiting for the flour, mills waiting for the grain, carpenters waiting for the lumber, soldiers waiting for the horses and the hay and the oats; dealers waiting for the pork, the lard, the butter, and the cheese; and hundreds of tradesmen and workmen all waiting for the things detained in the canal. Men lost opportunities of good bargains, lost their character for truth and prompt dealing, lost by the fall and change in the markets, lost by the decay and destruction of their cargoes; and all, all owing to that one mischievous musk-rat. The property which was destroyed would have given ten dollars a year to each of five hundred poor Sabbath-schools in all future time. And yet the poor musk-rat was not to blame: he knew no better; he had no thought of the mischief he was doing, or that he could do any hurt.

But what shall we say of those who do wrong, knowing that it is wrong? A very small hole may seriously injure a canal; a single spark of fire may burn up a city; the starting of a single bolt may sink a ship. So a single wrong deed may draw a great train of evil after it; a single wicked word may poison a little child; a single

wicked thought may be like opening the hole in the bank, through which a world of sin will follow; a single unholy feeling admitted into the soul may do untold hurt. It is as important what we do *not* do, as what we do.

Laziness does not belong to musk-rats more than to human beings. To save labour, the little animal may destroy a world of property. If we have laziness in the heart, out, out with it. We have too much responsibility resting on us to permit our being lazy. If we feel that we are too small to do good or hurt, remember that even one musk-rat may do untold hurt, though he himself is a very insignificant fellow.

Little Yellow-Throat.

IT is said that we have over forty different species of the warblers that flit among the branches of our northern forests. In a certain garden, surrounded by trees, there was a nest of these songsters. Among the thick leaves of the linden-tree the little nest was built, and there the tiny eggs were laid, and there hatched. The nestlings were very small at first, but at length they grew till the four little birds, all together, weighed just *one ounce*. No mother could be more anxious and careful than the parent bird, or more joyful than she on the day when they could leave the nest and try their wings. At first they could only flutter a little way before falling on the ground; but by degrees they gathered strength and courage till they could flit from tree to tree anywhere in the garden. Here they had their home, and here most of them were very happy. The old bird

taught them how to sing, how to fly, and where to find the best food. But the youngest of her family, whose name was "Yellow-Throat," perhaps the fairest and most beautiful of all the young brood, seemed to have a discontented spirit. She was difficult to please: her food was seldom right; the dews of the morning were too cool; the heat of the day was too great; the songs of her sisters were not in chord; or something was always wrong. Of course this spirit grew upon her, till her life was unhappy, and her presence made others unhappy. At length she gradually withdrew from society, and lived more and more alone. In vain her friends tried to draw her back into society, but poor Yellow-Throat had made up her mind that she ought to be unhappy, and she would be. She now began to fly to the tops of the trees and look out over the wall, to see how the world looked beyond the garden. One day as she sat thus peering about, she saw, apparently not very far distant, a large lake and a beautiful-looking island in its centre.

"Oh, what a beautiful lake!" cried Yellow-Throat; "how delightful it would be to fly over that smooth water and see one's self reflected from it as from a great looking-glass. And how delightful to be on that island, all alone, there to sing a song so sweet that even the mermaids would come up from the lake to listen. How I

wish I were there. I *can* be there. I *will* be there."

She then laid her plans how she would get up early next morning, and without stopping to eat, would fly away to that sweet island. The morning came, and as soon as the sun was well up, little Yellow-Throat turned her back upon mother and home, despising her beautiful garden, and without a farewell word to any one, or even a kind look, she lifted herself up on the wing, and in a few minutes was on her way to the lake. Alas, when she got to it, instead of being smooth as a mirror, the waves were tossing and dashing, the wind blew hard from the island, and it looked a great way off. But the poor thing was ashamed to go back, for she knew that ere this they would all know her folly, and so she flew forward. Cold and strong blew the wind, and on darted little Yellow-Throat, till at last, almost dead with fatigue, she reached the island, and dropped down on it panting for breath. But instead of finding the beautiful spot she expected, she found its shores all rocks; nothing on it but clumps of Norway pines, through which winds moaned and whistled. Not a bird nor a happy thing lived on it. Poor Yellow-Throat! how different from what her imagination painted. So she nestled down in the crevice of a rock, and waited and waited till the next morning should return.

At last it did return; but the wind had shifted, and now, to get back to the mainland again, she had to go far from the place she came from. But she felt that she must get there, or die here; and so, picking up for her breakfast a few sour ants that were creeping over the rocks, she again made for the shore. The wind helped her now, and she was not so much exhausted by the journey. She entered a great orchard, where the trees were large, and it seemed like going into the very land of plenty. But on the first tree on which she alighted, she came near losing her life; for on going to sleep a few moments to rest her, she barely awaked soon enough to escape the spring of a monster cat creeping towards her, with his great gray eyes wide open. "Oh," said the poor bird, "how I wish I were again at home, with my dear, dear mother, and brothers and sisters. But I don't know which way the garden lies, and cannot find it. What a foolish thing I was! And now I must die with hunger, for I find none of the sweet millet seed so abundant in my home."

At length she noticed a large flock of little birds coming and going to and from a farmer's granary. They had found a place where they could enter and steal as much food as they pleased. Yellow-Throat knew it was wrong to steal, but thought she might do as others did. So in she rushed with the rest, and filled her crop; but

alas! just as a great flock were coming out, a farmer's boy fired his gun loaded with very fine shot, directly among them. One shot struck poor Yellow-Throat, and she had strength only to fly and drop over the fence to die. And these were her dying words:—

"Alas, I am dying here, away from home and friends, and all for my folly. Oh that I could warn every bird and every boy and every girl to be content with what God has given them, and not try to better their condition by wishing and longing for change."

A Flock of Birds.

WHOLE flock of birds have found their way into my study, and there they are, just beside me, in a pretty glass case, between thirty and forty in number. They have all attitudes: some with wings and tails spread, some watching for flies, some singing, some scooping the air for the insect on the wing, and some standing grave, as if waiting for a truant child to come home. They are of all colours: jet black, brown, olive, bright blue, orange, crimson, scarlet, emerald green, and some with several colours mingled and mellowing into each other. They are bright as jewels, and one would think from their brilliancy that they had been born and coloured in the rainbow. I know nothing of their money value. They are not to be estimated by dollars and cents. They are the most beautiful blossoms of the air, and have a fragrance of the heart about them, for they

have just been sent to me by *the young men of my congregation.* To me, who love everything beautiful, and especially what is beautiful in character, they are of value not to be estimated.

In looking at them I seem to read human feeling, or rather, they seem to represent human character. That large, portly, rotund Woodcock, dressed in a rich chestnut suit, with brown shorts, and black boots: does he not look like a rich alderman, well-to-do in the world, with a good digestion, dignified and sober, and yet able to present here and there a long *bill* to his creditors?

And there is his cousin Snipe standing close by, so quiet and still, yet able to send that long bill far down in the sand, and bring up the worm and the bug that thought they were safe in their dark home. Friend Snipe, thou dost not look like a glutton, but thou remindest me of some men who contrive to get a good living where others would starve, and who will spend life in the mud and dirt for the sake of what they get out of it.

And thou, plain, brown, striped Mocking-bird, how very plain thou art. Did the Creator see that if thy plumage had been equal to thy voice thy vanity had destroyed thee? Oh, unequalled songster, how often have I sat down silent and amazed to hear thy little throat pour out the notes of all the feathered tribes around thee, while they

too were astonished into silence. Be content, thou winged music-box, to wear thy plain colours, and not to attract the eye. One such gift as thine is enough for one bird. Ah, yes, and I have seen human singers wondering why, with their wonderful voices, they could not also have had beauty of person. Be content. One great gift from our Creator is enough for one individual.

And there is the beautiful Goldfinch, the orange Oriole, the fiery Fire-bird of the forest, the beautiful Blue-bird, and many a gem of a bird, till we come to the little, tiny, bright-green and gold Humming-bird. Wonderful specimen of workmanship. How can that little creature move these wings so fast, with a noise like a mimic factory, darting like a lump of solid light, and then balancing on the wing as if dancing on an invisible floor?

All, all so beautiful! Where were they born? In what groves have they sung? Through what paths in the air have they travelled? Some from the cold north, some from the middle latitudes, and some from South America; how wonderful that you should all meet here and silently teach a humble minister of the gospel. I am *almost* sure that Adam and Eve must have admired you in Eden, as ye flew and sang and darted and flashed among the trees of that garden. And why, beautiful pets, are the male birds so brilliant

in colours, while the female is wood-coloured an very plain? Perhaps because the female mus sit in her nest and tend her young, and if he colours were bright, the hawk and the owl an the serpent would see her and eat her up. Nov she looks like the tree; while the male by hi very brilliancy can flash through the trees, an thus lead the hawk away from the nest and hi mate. Perhaps when thus engaged he forgets hi regimentals, and is not vain of his beauty. Doe he ever wish his wife were more beautiful?

Oh the goodness of the Lord! How he paint the grass and the leaves and the flowers of th earth, and then tosses flowers through the ai that we may see his skill and admire his beauti ful creations everywhere, and see that earth an water, air and sky, are full of his goodness an the wonders of his skill. My new treasures sha each be a preacher to me, silent but eloquent.

A Beautiful Picture.

PICTURES are called beautiful, sometimes for one reason and sometimes for another. I have the walls of my study adorned with many, the description of which would be interesting. They are chiefly mementoes of friends. Many of them are very beautiful; but only a few touch the heart. But I have recently received one from a friend at which I cannot look without emotion. It is a small affair, and I do not even know its title. It might be called the "Voyage of Life," or the "Family Group," or "From One Shore to Another." Let me describe it.

There is a plain, strong, every-day-looking boat on the water. The place of her destiny is hidden from sight. There are eleven individuals in it. At the bow of the boat are three children, with a basket of flowers near them. One careless, good-natured little girl is sitting down with her chin

on the gunwale of the boat, looking towards you in a sort of dreamy state. She has no thought as to how fast they move, or where they are to go, or whether there are rocks and dangers before them. How carelessly her little sun-bonnet sits on her head. She is neither hungry, nor thirsty, nor weary, nor anxious, nor even curious. She is the picture of contentment. Happy child!

Near her, at the bow also, are two other children, a little boy and his younger sister. He has evidently seen something, or he thinks he has, in the distance, and is eagerly pointing it out to the sister. She is trying to see it too, and they are absorbed. How fresh, how new, how beautiful is life before them! Everything is on a large scale: great trees, great water, great hills, and great men!

Just behind them is the rower of the boat, who, I suppose, is Time. He is neither old nor young, and is both. He is looking with a curious face on the two lovers who sit just forward of the middle of the boat. The youth is evidently telling the fresh emotions of the heart in the low tones of love to the maiden who sits near him, and who holds a bunch of flowers just taken from her lap; and she lets it dip in the water, as if she were too much occupied with that to hear the foolish things which he is whispering. She gazes down in the water, and sees that the flowers

are already beginning to be washed from their stems. How eager he seems; how modest she. They look neither backward nor forward: they are full of the present. They see nobody else, and are not aware, apparently, that there is another person in the boat. Beautiful maiden! she thinks that if the waters should carry off every flower-bud in her hand, she has a whole lapful left. To them the world contains nothing but flowers.

Just behind them are three figures. The man in middle life stands tall, firm, self-possessed, and yet evidently not without anxiety. He is looking forward, with an eager, sharp gaze, towards the spot to which the boat is moving. He sees not his wife sitting close to him, though, as he touches her shoulder with his left hand, it is plain that he *feels* her presence. Evidently he realizes that all in the boat are committed to him, and manfully does he stand up to meet the responsibility. He will not disappoint expectation.

At his feet sits his wife. Her beautiful little boy lays his head on her knee, going to sleep, contented and safe and happy "to be where mother is." She lays her right hand on him as a living shield; but she sees him not. Her eyes are upward, watching her husband's face. She knows his anxious look, and shows that she feels that her future and that of her children all depend

on him. What a confiding, humble, grateful gaze she bestows on him. Is he not "a strong and beautiful staff;" and is she not secure as long as he is with her to direct the boat and eye the future? You can see the confidence and love of the wife expressed in the open, clear eye, with which she regards him. Peerless gift of God to man—the gentle, modest, loving wife! No other friend can ever take her place, in counsel, in sympathy, in self-denial, in forbearance, and in affection. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

At the stern of the boat are two figures, and how you sympathize with their sadness. They are an aged couple—probably the parents, who have seen the spring, the summer, and the autumn of life pass by them, while its winter is now upon them. They are old, and have drunk from the cup of life till they find its dregs—put there to make them willing to let it go from them. The aged wife holds her travelling-basket in her lap, as if it contained all that they will want during the remainder of the voyage, her hands lightly clasped together, and with a sad face she is looking back upon what they have passed over. Does she see the green mounds which covered her little ones long, long ago? Do pictures of the long life and its changes come before her? Do the graves of friends, neighbours, and a multitude who began

life with her, rise to view? Is the past receding, so that she sees it more and more dimly? She lives in the memories of the past, and the progress of the boat now makes no impression on her. She does not, for the moment, see her husband, the venerable, bending figure sitting near her. How he bows that head leaning upon his staff, the white locks, "the crown of glory," resting on his shoulders. You notice the dark mourning crape upon his hat; he beholds nothing back, nothing forward, nothing present. He is looking down into the boat, thinking, thinking. What are the thoughts that are now thronging through his heart? Evidently he has done with the past, has nothing to do with the future, and nothing with the present. What does he see in the bottom of the boat? Is it the picture of his own grave; or is he peering only into vacancy and musing of the farther shore where he hopes to meet those for whom he wears the crape? Who can help giving their sympathy to this aged couple?

Our sweetest joys and our deepest sorrows grow in the family. "He setteth one thing over against another;" and in proportion to the love and confidence which bind our hearts together, so are our sorrows deep when death separates us. And eagerly does the head of the family look forward, not only to see what lies before the family

boat as it glides over the waters of time, but also to pierce that veil which hangs over the land whither they are going. Will that old man meet the little ones who perished from his arms years ago; and will he know them as the babes that were once his? Will he greet those children who died in manhood, and will they come around him as their father? And why does he not now wish to go to them? Why had he rather bend over his poor staff and toddle along a little further, than die when the joys of life are all gone? Because God has made us to love life, that we may be careful of it; and because, also, it is all an unknown land whither we go. We know that they live there; for Moses and Samuel and Elijah and Paul have been there and come back to us. But they had no power, for it is not in human language to describe what that world is. Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, the heart hath not conceived it. Oh, what will it be when the whole family shall reach that blessed shore, and there be reunited in youth that is immortal, in glory unfading, and in blessedness eternal and infinite!

The Simple Breakfast.

E drew our little boat up on a beautiful little island in the lake, where we proposed to take our breakfast. It was early in the morning, but my Indian guide had my breakfast ready in a much shorter time than I had supposed possible.

"I hope you feel hungry," said he, "for our breakfast is very simple."

We had a large newly caught lake trout, coffee, biscuits, butter, salt, and pepper; and this he called "very simple." The remark set me to thinking.

"Sabattis, how old do you suppose our trout, that we are eating, is?"

"I cannot tell; but I notice that all the trout of last year weigh about a pound, and those that I call two years old, about two pounds; this fellow, then, that weighs at least five or six pounds, must be five years old."

"Very well. Now what enemies beset this trout during the five years?"

"During the first year the older trout hunt and eat them always as surely as they can find them, so that they must go into shallow water to get rid of them. There the kingfisher stands ready to eat them at all hours of the day. Next the wild ducks, as they lead out their young and feed them. Then the loon, which I believe would eat a peck of fish a day if he could get them, hunts them without mercy. If he escape all these, there is the fisherman with his trolling-rod, or his line at the buoy, or his spear and torch-light, as the fish lie on their spawning-beds in the autumn. Among all these, I often wonder how a trout ever lives to grow as large as the one we are now eating."

"Yes; and how many fish must have been created for his food during all these years and all this growth. How much do you suppose he eats daily?"

"There's no saying. I have often caught them when they had at least half-a-pound of undigested fish in their stomachs; and then again without anything. They seem to eat enormously when they can get enough, and to go without when they can't."

"Well, it seems to me, from your account of the matter, we are to have a very costly breakfast;

and I marvel at that Providence that has gone before us to get it ready for us."

"How costly, sir?"

"Why, there are five years of watch and care to rear our fish down in the bottom of that lake, defend him from being eaten up a hundred times, help him away from the fisherman's hook, and then at the very time when we needed him to have him snap at our hook and be taken. Then we needed salt, and there it is, made in the West Indies, and brought by a hundred hands to this place. There too is the pepper, raised on the island of Ceylon, and brought here for seasoning. There is our butter, made from the grass on the hills, which have been turned into pasture after years of toil. These biscuits are from wheat that grew in Illinois, ground and baked ready for our use. It would be curious to know how many farmers, merchants, sailors, teamsters, and labourers, have been employed in getting what you call our 'simple breakfast' ready. And then consider that if all the people on this Earth are to be fed this day, and should they all be seated side by side, each one occupying but eighteen inches, their table would reach round the Earth, twenty-four thousand miles! Food to be created, gathered, and cooked, so that all these can eat three times every day! And these are only one kind of the unnumbered creatures which have to

be fed. 'Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'"

"I see it is so; but I never thought of it before."

"And that forgetfulness of God and of his constant providence is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. The fact is, friend Sabbatis, men do not love to think about God, or to acknowledge him in anything. I was lately in a place suffering from the want of rain —the crops withering and the streams drying up; and though the people wanted rain, longed for it, spoke of it, yet I doubt if any one prayed for it, or looked to God as the one who 'maketh a path for the rain.' I heard many profane words, but not one of prayer. And it sometimes seems to me very strange that God endures a race of creatures so unthankful as we are; truly 'it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.' But this mercy of the Lord is like an ocean, without bounds, without bottom, and fanned by the wings of angels. I think that we ought to recognize God in everything; and when I hear a blessing asked at the table, I understand it to be an acknowledgment that God has gone before and provided our food, gathered from all parts of the world, and prepared for us personally."

A Mystery on the Ocean Bottom.

FAR down in the deep waters of the ocean there are mountains and rocks and valleys and caves, just as there are up in our world. Sometimes the sailor drops the lead attached to a cord, and it sinks down not far; and then again at a little distance, it will sink down, down very far. In the first place it fell upon a mountain, and then in a valley. Were the great ocean dried up, we should see wonders there.

At the foot of one of these mountains in the ocean there was a kind of tea-party met, consisting of Mrs. Eel, Mrs. Lobster, Mrs. Cod, Mrs. Shrimp, Mrs. Flounder, and Mrs. Nautilus. The fact was, a curious event had happened, and they were met to discuss it. A long, small thing, had come creeping down the mountain and across the valley, and along it went on the ocean's bottom, so long *that they* could see no end to it either

way. Gently it came down and lay quite still on the bottom of the ocean.

"Mrs. Eel," said Mrs. Lobster, "is not this some relation of yours? It looks more like one of the Eel family than anything else."

"I would have you to know," said Mrs. Eel, "that an eel has a head and a tail and fins; and don't you see this has none? An eel keeps moving; and don't you see this doesn't move at all? How could you think it was an eel?"

"I thought it was a worm," said Mrs. Cod, "and I tried to bite it. Whew! it almost broke my teeth out. It's nothing that I can eat; though you know, Mrs. Lobster, I can eat a whole family of lobsters, if they are not too old."

"I'll tell you what *I* think," said little Mrs. Shrimp. "It's a thing for us shrimps to creep on and cling to, and under which to lay our eggs and raise our young."

"It's very plain," said Mrs. Flounder, "it is a scratcher, just for us flounders to swim over and scrape our breasts on."

"You are all wrong," said Mrs. Nautilus. "It is *a thinking machine.*"

"A what?" exclaimed all together.

"A thinking machine, I tell you. There are creatures that live up out of the waters who *think* a great deal. They send messages, instead of *going* to carry them. They are curious creatures,

and sometimes when I have been up on the top of the water I have seen them."

"Why, what fables you are telling us! Do you expect that we shall believe that creatures can live out of the water?"

"Yes, *they* do. And instead of fins and tails they have two legs with which they walk."

"A very unlikely story," said Mrs. Lobster. "When even I, skilful as I am, can't walk on less than a dozen legs, how can they walk on two? What kind of fins have they?"

"They don't have fins; they have arms and hands instead. They seem to be full of *thought*. Now this machine, so long that you, Mrs. Lobster, could not creep to the other end of it in a life-time, is one of their contrivances. They will stand at one end of it, and send thoughts or messages through to the other end in a moment; and thus they talk to each other hundreds and thousands of miles apart. Even now, while we are looking at it, they are sending their thoughts through it."

"That I don't believe," said Mrs. Cod.

"Neither do I," said Mrs. Eel.

"Why not?"

"Because we can't *see* any thought passing through it."

"No; nor *hear* it."

"No; nor *smell* it."

"No; nor *feel* it. Now you don't think we

are such fools as to believe a thing which we can't see, nor hear, nor smell, nor feel, do you? You don't expect us to believe there are creatures who can live out of water, and move without fins, and *think all along the bottom of the ocean.* Oh, Mrs. Nautilus, we are proud to know we are above being deceived by such stories. We don't believe there is any world but our ocean world. Pray what kind of light do they have up there?"

"Oh, it is stronger and purer and more beautiful than ours. Compared with ours *it is consolidated light.* It's a more glorious state than ours, and the creatures who live there and think so much, are far higher in their nature than we."

"Well, Mrs. Nautilus, that will do for one day. We may as well break up our party. We can't associate with one who tries to make us believe what we can't understand. We know too much for such deception."

At that Mrs. Lobster opened her great claw as if she would crush poor Mrs. Nautilus, and Mrs. Cod rolled her eyes and snapped her great jaws. Mrs. Eel twisted and darted here and there, and Mrs. Shrimp swelled, and Mrs. Flounder turned her eyes and looked sideways.

Alas, poor creatures! just as wise as the Sadducees and such like people, who say "there is neither angel nor spirit," nor a higher state than this, *because they cannot comprehend it.*

Unlike and yet Alike.

"YOU talk about true religion," said Mr. Dunbar to his friend, old Mr. James Hamilton. "Now isn't true religion the same thing, created by the same Spirit, the world over?"

"Certainly it is."

"So I believe; or so I should believe, if I believed at all. But instead of seeing all have the same religion, there's hardly two that think alike. You talk about the 'revival' now going on in our city: will it make them all alike; or rather, is it not so, that men who thought and felt alike before becoming religious, begin to differ and separate more and more immediately after?"

"Ah well, we will not argue the question; but will you go with me this evening?"

"With all my heart."

So Mr. Hamilton meekly led his friend first into a Presbyterian prayer-meeting. It was very

full and still and solemn. The prayers were short and full of awe. The minister read the Word of God, and they sang hymns in long metre, slowly, strongly, and solemnly. At length a young man arose, and said that he began to indulge a trembling hope that he had been born of the Spirit; but that his sins seemed so many, his life so guilty, that he abhorred himself; that he knew he deserved hell, and that nothing but the mercy of God in Christ kept him out of it. He spoke with diffidence, with awe, and almost with terror, as if ready to sink under his own sins. The great impression which he conveyed was *the guilt of his soul.* It seemed as if the Spirit had "convinced him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come."

Next they went to a meeting of the Baptists. They seemed to speak and pray readily, and with simplicity and sincerity. Both sexes participated. A young convert arose to tell his "experience." He had been led to see that he needed religion, and he had made up his mind that he must have it. He was ready to take up the cross and "go down into Jordan" and be baptized; nay, he longed for the day to come when he should be immersed. It was a most joyful anticipation.

Then they went into a Methodist meeting. There they sang, and shouted, and prayed, and

clapped their hands. A young convert broke out in shouts. He had found the Saviour. He had set his face towards Zion; nothing would turn him back—"Glory to God!" "Hallelujah!" He only wanted wings to fly. He had no fears, no terrors, no doubts. It was all clear and delightful to him. He could not shout and sing loud enough.

They then went into an Episcopalian meeting, and there too was a young convert, and devoutly was he reading his prayer-book. It never seemed so beautiful or so precious before. Those prayers were just what suited his case—so reverential, so unexceptionable, so majestic. How he admired the "excellency of our liturgy," and felt that the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places and that he had a goodly heritage. He felt sure that under no other form of worship could he grow in grace so fast.

Next they went to a small, plain-looking Quaker meeting-house. There too they found a young convert. He did not shout, did not read prayers, did not ask for baptism, did not speak about his guilt; but he sat down alone and pondered and thought, and had "great searchings of heart." He thought of his own heart and life, of his need of a Saviour, and of the character and worth of Christ. He did not weep or smile, but he pondered and meditated.

"There now; how unlike!" said Mr. Dunbar. "Is it not just as I said—no two alike?"

"Nay; you are there greatly mistaken, sir. If you could see their hearts, you would find that all this difference is merely outside. Get into the heart, and you will find that they feel alike as to their sins, as to their need of mercy, and as to the fitness of Christ to be their Redeemer. Put them in heaven, and they would all go together and cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet."

"What makes them so different then here?"

"You must remember that all these have different minds and modes of thinking; they were not educated alike, not instructed in the Bible alike, and have moved in different spheres. And the Holy Spirit has kindly adapted himself to their peculiar character: 'Diversities of operations, but the same Spirit.' You and I would try to make men and Christians all in one mould; but God does not so make men. And instead of its being an argument against the reality of religion, this diversity of showing its workings in the heart is a strong argument in its favour. Beneath this apparent diversity there is unity. I have just been to see a sick child; he was near death, and singing in a low voice, 'I want to be an angel.' And I have this very afternoon been to see a young maiden near her end, and she was singing, 'Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee;'

and also a poor sufferer under the most awful pains, and she said, Thou holdest mine eyes waking. I am so troubled that I cannot speak; but I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine own heart. The Lord will not cast me off for ever. His mercy is not clean gone for ever. His promise will not fail for evermore. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'"

"Diversities of operations, but the same Spirit."

A Tough Customer.

THERE is a certain fellow who travels about, but who is so shy that we hardly ever catch more than a glimpse of him. I have several times met him, but he always contrived so to muffle up his face that I found it difficult to see how he looks. But one day I met him, fairly met him face to face. He had a very old look, a sharp, hatchet face, eyes that seemed to shoot out fire as he peered around. His skin was bronzed and greatly wrinkled. He was evidently a great traveller; and his feet seemed to be made of flint, and his hands of iron. He had a great load of tools, for he was evidently a hard worker. His pockets were filled with parchments and papers. In his hands he held large rusty keys, a long sharp sword, heavy chains, some hot pincers, and several fire-brands. He strode along, looking as innocent as possible, and yet so fiercely did he

move that I was afraid he would run over me, and stamp me with his heels of flint; so I hailed him.

"Hallo there! don't run over me. Pray who are you?"

"An old traveller, sir, moving about among men, making war upon hypocrites and the superstitious; always ready to do a good turn, and never idle."

"Why, sir, you don't look right to me. Is it possible you are a holy reformer, and go about doing good?"

"That's it, I assure you. I have done a great deal of good in my day."

"Pray how will you prove that?"

"Don't you admire the Psalms of David, especially those in which he cries out so loudly against his enemies?"

"To be sure I do."

"Well, I helped him to write all those psalms. I wrung them out of him.—Don't you like the story of Daniel?"

"Certainly I do."

"Well again, I pushed those three men into the furnace of fire; and I thrust Daniel in among the lions; and though things didn't work as I expected, yet that was not my fault.—You like the Epistles of Paul, don't you?"

"Yes, very much. The Bible would be very

incomplete without them. But you don't pretend that you wrote *them*, do you?"

"Not exactly. But you notice that they are mostly dated in a prison. Well, sir, I put him in those prisons. A capital place in which to write letters. I confess I did not think he would do that. I only wanted to stop his preaching; but he was a long-headed fellow, and I am not certain but I should have done better to have let him go on preaching. The fact is, I got caught so once since. There was a warm-hearted tinker, who went round preaching and scaring people out of their wits. I got him shut up in a jail; but what did the creature do but go to writing a Dream, which has had more effect upon the world than a hundred such preachers. Things will work so sometimes."

"Pray what have you in that great bag thrown over your right shoulder?"

"Dresses, sir; nothing but dresses. I sometimes want to come out in a Heathen costume, sometimes in a Mohammedan, and sometimes in a Papal. I can work in one dress and costume as well as in another."

"I see. But what's in that bag under your left arm, which you hug so closely?"

"They are little nettles, sir, with which I fill the air, and make the faces of people smart. They are commonly known by the name of *sneers*."

"What do you do with that long pole in your hand?"

"Oh, I stir up mischief, and rouse up neighbours; and by a few pokes can set the drunkard to shouting, and the genteel to scoffing, and the profane to blaspheming. But I am in a hurry, and can't stop to talk all day."

"Where are you going in such haste?"

"Why, sir, I'm going to the next town. I hear there is some trouble there with the minister; and I am going to put in my pole. I feel sure I can drive him out of town."

"Yes; but why do you want to do that?"

"What a simple question! Don't you see I am an enemy to all humbug, and all priestcraft, and all that superstition which men call Religion?"

"I see, I see. But what may I call your name if I should ever meet you again?"

"PERSECUTION, sir; old *Diabolus Persecution*, at your service. Don't you want me to do something for you?"

Homes of the Poor.

THE cars stopped in front of the great factory just at night, as all the workmen were coming out—a great multitude. When you look at a great multitude at once, you feel very little interest in them; but the moment you select one or two and look at their faces, you begin to feel an interest in them. Among those who came out I noticed two,—respectable, intelligent-looking men, engaged in earnest conversation. They had evidently got already to some subject more interesting than their mechanical labour in the workroom. What were they so earnestly discussing? —religion, politics, some new book, or new discovery in art or science? While I conjectured, they passed on, and I observed another, a tall, straight, fine-looking man. Over his shoulder hung a large salt cod-fish, done up in brown paper. He looked happy. Doubtless, his day's work

being done, he was now on his way home to wife and children, carrying them food, and expecting to see their smiles and to hear their greetings. What a wonderful mark of the wisdom of God, that such a strong man, instead of being idle and vicious, instead of being a thief or a robber, instead of being a curse to the world, is now willing and happy to spend his life in toiling early and late to make his home comfortable, his wife and children happy. He can't leave and go away, he can't stop working, he can't waste his money, and yet among all that multitude who surround him not one calls him a fool or laughs at his drudgery. They all know he is happier than men who have no families. And is it not curious that a man will thus spend his life, barely having clothing and food himself, that he may provide for his family? There is an unseen cord that binds him to his home, and all this toil and labour are no burden to him; and this cord, called *love*, is the whole secret.

There was another on whom the eye rested; it was a thin-faced, pale little girl, about twelve years old. She was barefooted, with nothing on her head, and she looked tired and jaded. She had finished her day's work, and was now on her way home. Did I pity the poor child? Certainly; but then I thought, "Now probably this little child has a poor home, and has to work hard; but very likely by so doing she helps to provide

for her mother, and thus she and her little brothers and sisters have better food and better clothing, and have many comforts which they could not have without her labour. She, too, instead of being brought up in idleness and in filth, has learned to be industrious, and has found that industry will procure wages and comforts. She has learned how she can support herself and be independent. She has taught her mother to value and love the little being whose toil helps her to bear the burdens of life. No; I need not pity her as much as if no such blessing came out of all this. Very likely that little girl has in her the elements of a noble character; at any rate she is taking great lessons in life; and though the burden falls upon her while a mere child, yet what a blessing for her to feel every day that she is so useful."

So my thoughts ran, till soon I noticed a neat but pale woman, with a baby in her arms, come to meet the little factory girl, to take her hand, and so speak to her that the smile of childhood, which I feared had been worn off for ever, returned in all its beauty. It was plain that she was bringing a loving heart to meet her child, and a tender care for her. She could not wait, but must meet her child, and carry the baby too, and lead her home. May God bless that home. It is not likely I shall ever see that little girl or

her mother again. I can do nothing for them. They may sicken and die, and I shall not know it. But if the glance of a stranger's eye upon them can awaken so much interest in his heart, what may we not hope from the loving care and tender protection of our heavenly Father? His eye follows them to their humble home, and he knows every anxiety of their hearts. That little sparrow that sits so unconcernedly on yonder bush, not knowing where and how she will find the next morsel of food, or where she will sleep to-night, is under his care and love; and that little thistle-down, floating away in the air, will settle in the very place where he directs. How rich is every one who has a Father who owns the world! How lovingly and how confidently that babe rested in the arms of its mother, not fearing that she would let it fall, or that her strength would give out, or that her love would be exhausted, or that she could not provide for it. Oh that we might so feel towards our heavenly Father, whose knowledge numbers the very hairs of our heads, and whose care and tender mercy are over all his works. Oh, little child, who knowest not when thy foot will slip, or when pain and sickness will overtake thee, or what thy life may be, I know thee not; but how blessed the privilege of commending thee to the everlasting Redeemer, who doeth all things well.

Where to Leave our Troubles.

AS the angel of mercy flew over the Earth at midnight, he saw so many forms of sorrow, heard so many groans of pain, listened to so many sighs of distress, that his heart was moved and saddened. He went and laid his sadness at the feet of Jesus on the throne.

"Go back," said the sweet Voice. "Go back and visit each one of those sufferers, and see if they need suffer as they do."

Down again to the Earth the swift angel flew, and entered a small, humble dwelling. He paused and stood in the chamber door. On the bed lay a dying father. He was pale, and breathed with difficulty. On his breast lay *a great bundle.* It was evident it was very heavy and very oppressive. He could not get it off. Presently the angel saw a Hand close by the bed holding a large sack in the shape of the human heart, and

on it was written, "Cast in *all* thy cares, for He careth for thee." The writing was in letters of light, large and plain. The poor man put his trembling hand into the bundle, and took out a handful marked, "Anxieties for my poor wife." Slowly and tremblingly he cast it in. Then he took another marked, "Distress for my orphan children." He threw that also in; and his load was lighter. Once more he took up another parcel marked, "Oh! my aged father and mother." Slowly he dropped it into the sack. Then he seemed to be frightened at what he had done, and tried to reach down and take back these several burdens. But no; the Hand withdrew the sack and he could not take them back. Then his breathing became soft and easy, his face lit up with smiles, his heart beat with hope, and he died in peace and joy, casting all his cares on Him who cared for him.

Next the angel of mercy entered a magnificent dwelling. Softly they were treading upon the rich Turkey carpet; with gentle step and low breathing they were gathering around the couch of a beautiful, dying child. Near the little sufferer stood the mother, pale, tearless, wringing her hands in agony. Her child, she knew, must die—was dying. Slowly and gently the Hand held up the heart-sack, and she read, "Cast all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you." In

a moment she threw in her sorrows, her griefs, and her agonies; but before she could feel relief she suddenly stooped down and snatched them up again, and laid them on her own heart. A tender Voice seemed to say, "Cast in, cast in, and thou shalt be comforted." But she would not. She said she *had* cast in all her cares, and wondered why she was not comforted. Poor weeper! she forgot that we must leave our cares with Him as well as cast them upon Him.

Again, the angel stood in the study of a minister of Christ. It was Sabbath evening; and the wearied man was thinking over the results of another day's sowing, and was crying to his Master, "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? When will the harvest-day come?" The Voice spoke to him, "Be not weary in well-doing;" "In due season you shall reap, if you faint not."

And then he met the physician just entering his home, after having seen nearly forty patients since he last slept. He was worn down. There was an epidemic, and the community was filled with terror. What could he do? He had exhausted all his skill. Gently the Hand held up the sack, and he saw written, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it

shall be given him." "Cast all your cares upon him."

Then the angel met a little child in the street, sobbing and in tears.

"What is the matter, little one?"

"Oh! I can't understand my lesson, and my teacher is not patient with me. I try hard; but I can't get it."

In a moment the Hand drew the sack up to the little one, and the Voice bade him throw in his sobs and his tears.

And the angel saw that in every instance when they cast in their cares, and *did not take them up again*, they all were comforted and cheered. They could dry up their tears, and the smile followed the tear. But when they refused to cast them in, or were unwilling to let them remain after they *had* cast them in, there was no comfort; the Hand withdrew the sack, and left the poor sufferer to his sorrows. And as the angel went back to the Throne, he brought a loud thanksgiving that there is *one place* large enough to hold all the sorrows of Earth, if the poor sufferers would only cast them in, and let them remain there.

"Earth hath no sorrows which Heaven cannot cure."

Beware of the Cricket.

IT was once a matter of great surprise that a man who had passed through the temptations of youth and early manhood should then fall, become a knave, and ruin his character; but we have a great many such in our penitentiaries now, and probably many more who ought to be there. When we consider how great is the hunger and thirst for money at the present day, how varied and multiplied are the temptations to dishonesty, perhaps we ought not to wonder at the number of those who cannot resist the temptation. Now and then a gray-headed man will yield, and throw away all the character which his life has earned. The great Tempter is a skilful fisher, who waits long and tries different kinds of bait before he hooks such.

The taking of such makes me think of a good illustration of what I mean, and which I lately saw.

As I was sauntering along by the side of a small stream I came to a high dam, over which the waters came tumbling and foaming and roaring as if suddenly awakened out of a pleasant sleep, and plunged headlong over the falls. At the foot of the falls was foam, and the waters twisted and eddied here and there, as if frightened at their late plunge; but their surface was smooth, as if they were trying again to become quiet. Just as I reached this place I saw Jem White, a keen old fisherman, creeping up-stream, and stopping just under the falls. Carefully he fixed his rod and put on his beautiful June fly, and with a jerk, such as none but an old fly-fisherman understands, he threw it spinning over the water, and carefully made it swim on the top of the water. Scarcely had he done this when a magnificent trout—I had no conception there could be such a fish in the pool—came up and looked at the fly without touching it.

"Aha!" he seemed to say, "you don't catch me so; I am a little too old to be caught in that way. I don't fancy that fly, sir."

Again the fisherman put on another fly and threw it over the pool; but no, the old trout was not to be caught thus. Then he tried one fly after another till he had used more than a dozen kinds; but nothing would tempt the old trout. Not a fish nor a shadow of a fish could he raise.

Carefully laying his rod on the rock, he climbed up the bank, and going off into a field, he turned up a flat stone, and under it he found two large crickets. One of these he succeeded in capturing. With a peculiar twinkle in his eye, he returned and fixed his cricket on the hook in such a way as not to kill it. Carefully now he threw his line, so gently that the poor cricket seemed to have jumped into the water, and to be swimming for dear life. This was too much. Pop! up came the old trout and snapped the poor cricket, and in an instant he was hooked; and Jem's eyes twinkled more still as he let him swim here and there, just keeping the line taut, without breaking the delicate thread. A long time he plagued the poor fellow, till he was tired out, and then he gently drew him near the shore and caught him in his landing-net, just as the officer catches a rogue after hooking him and letting him have the line a while. He was a very large, old trout, which had resisted the temptation of all sorts of flies and baits and hooks till he saw the live cricket, and the temptation was too great to resist. Poor, foolish fish! the fisherman was too much for thee. He knew how to find the very bait that would take thee. And does not the greater Tempter thus fit his bait to every one, and find the very cricket that is irresistible?

When I see a man who was accounted honest

till he reached a position where he could defraud a bank and become a defaulter for a great sum, I say to myself, "That fellow could not resist the cricket."

And when another seems honest, and, like our fish, has never bit at small things, yet when he becomes a railroad manager, and speculates and steals by the hundred thousand dollars, I feel sure that the cricket must have looked large in his eyes.

How often do we see the boy who means to be noble and manly resisting many temptations, till the cricket is thrown before him in the shape of cigars, or cards, or drinking, or bad company, and then the fish is caught!

How often do we see the little girl, amiable, kind, and sweet-tempered, till her young companion has received a prize that she hoped to obtain, or outshone her in a new dress, and then the fish is caught by the cricket!

Oh, ye new bonnets and new dresses! ye lighted cigars! ye places of drink! ye piles of money!—what baits ye are in the hand of the great Destroyer, with which he catches his fish! Alas! we know not how strong or how weak we are till the bait is thrown before us, and then it is often too late. Pray, pray earnestly to God that he will give you grace to stand and resist for to-day, and when to-morrow comes offer the same earnest prayer. Beware of the cricket-bait.

Climbing and Falling.

ON the banks of a beautiful river stood a large, wide-spreading, and yet lofty tree. The waters that flowed past it were so pure, and the stream always so full, that the tree was always green, full of leaves, and abounding in fruit. At all times it had fragrant blossoms, whose sweetness filled the air, and at the same time was loaded with fruit that delighted the eye.

At the foot of this tree there lived many nimble, active, and intelligent ants. They were told that the fruit on this tree was most delicious for food, most satisfying to the appetite, and most nourishing to the eater. All around the tree looked poor in comparison with that golden fruit. They knew, too, that by climbing up into the tree they could have just as much of the fruit as they wanted. Many ants had gone up and reached it, and sent word back for their friends and neighbours to

hasten up. By looking upward they could see the golden sunbeams dancing among the green foliage, and the fair fruit hanging on every bough. At last they determined that they would leave their old home, and go and live up among this beautiful fruit. So they began to climb up, some going straight upward, and some in a zig-zag course. But it was soon found that they kept slipping and falling down again. Some hardly got started; some got up a few feet, and some a little higher; but the result was the same. So I set myself to watch them, and see what the reason could be that they so soon fell back to the place of starting. The first one which I noticed was an old ant, whose joints seemed somewhat stiffened by age, and who came tumbling and rolling down in a hurry.

"What's the matter with you, friend?"

"Matter enough. I can't get up, and there's no use trying. Every time I have tried I have fallen."

"Well, why do you try to tug up that bit of straw? That's what tumbles you down. It's too heavy."

"Straw! Sir, do you call that straw? Why, it's the *property* I have been all my life earning. There is not another ant under the tree who owns such a property. I *must* carry that, at all events."

The next ant had got up a little higher, when

a light puff of wind blew him off, and he came whirling down.

"Why, my good fellow, do you try to carry that bit of red feather in your mouth? Don't you see the wind strikes it and upsets you, and tumbles you off?"

"Red feather, you call it? No, sir, that is not its name. It is called *fashion*, sir, among us ants, and the longer the feather the more fashionable is the owner, and I assure you there is no one who can show such a feather as that. Oh, sir, I can't think of going up and leaving my red feather behind."

The next one that came rolling down fell so hard and kicked so feebly that I really thought he was killed; but he soon picked himself up, and what do you think he had as his load? It was a grain of hard, yellow sand.

"Well, Mr. Ant, you are here, and I see what kept you from going up; but I can't see the use of that grain of sand."

"Sand, sir, sand! No, that is pure *gold*. There is not another such lump in all antdom. And would you have me go up if I can't carry my gold? I had rather never taste the fruit on this tree."

Down came another, and as he fell I heard a sort of ringing sound. And, can you believe it, the fellow had a fiddle in one of his claws!

"Oh dear, I fear I shall never get up. How many times I have fallen! But I can't go and leave my fiddle. I must have my *amusements* else I can't live; and if I can't carry them with me, there is no use in my going."

Then I saw another trying to carry up a little flask of *brandy*—just to give him strength and to enable him to climb the faster, as he said. But he hardly began to ascend before he fell to the ground.

Among them was a curious, sly fellow, who seemed to have nothing to hinder him, and yet he could not get up. But on close examination I noticed that he had a small secret vial, in which was a drop of something very black. He tried to hide it, but I caught a glimpse of it, and saw it labelled "*secret sin.*" He toiled and tugged hard, but the vial was too much—he could not get up.

Dear reader, this tree is the Tree of Life; this river is the River of Life; this fruit is communion with God and the faith that lifts us to heaven. You see the things that keep us from going up and taking of the fruits. We try to carry too heavy burdens. We are not willing to leave the follies and the things of this world behind us. Poor little ants; poor human beings. How much alike.

The Deformed Child's Dream.

THE longer we live the more we love, or ought to love, little children. Their joys and sorrows come and go very quickly, but every one leaves some impression which goes into character, and perhaps writes its history on the memory. A cruelty, an unjust accusation, or a severe judgment, which the little one cannot argue or even resent, may put a small thorn in the memory which no after years can extract. I sometimes see these little creatures blind, or deaf, or deformed, and my heart goes out towards them with a sympathy not to be described.

At the door of a small cottage just under the shadow of a great mountain, on a bright morning, sat a poor little deformed child. The children were all gathering towards the small school-house near by, and as they came, with their shouts and ringing laughs, swinging their little dinner-baskets,

happy as birds, running and leaping, the poor child turned her mild, large eyes towards them, and covered her face with her apron, and sobbed and wept. She knew that she would never run with them, never go to school, never be one among them. Her journey through life, longer or shorter, must be alone. If the children ever stopped to speak to her, not unlikely before they left they would say something to remind her of her deformity, and to show that she was not one of them. She had often felt her lonely lot, but never as this morning did it so weigh down her heart. Her widowed mother heard her sobs, and guessed too well what was the cause, and shed new tears for the thousandth time over her only and dear suffering child. She made no attempt to comfort her; she knew she could not.

How long the child sobbed I know not; but some time after, her mother went to her and found her lying on her side, her arm under her head, her kitten purring near her, and herself sound asleep, with a sweet smile playing on her face. "Poor thing," said the mother to herself, "she has forgotten her sorrows, and it may be she dreams that she is well and running about with other children. But it is only in dreams that my dear one will ever run. When she has no mother to lift and carry her, what will she do? O Father in heaven, why was this poor sufferer born?"

A little after, the child awoke and called to her mother. With a step never slow when that voice was heard, the mother hastened to her.

"Oh, mother, I have had such a beautiful dream! It makes me happy to think of it."

"What was it, my child?"

"I thought I was in a great garden full of roses and tulips and all kinds of splendid flowers. The humming-birds flew among them, the honey-bees went from flower to flower, and the birds sang in all the trees around the garden. There were fountains of water playing, beautiful paths to walk in, benches and chairs to sit on, and a great multitude of people walking about and admiring the flowers. Presently the owner of the garden came in, and seeing me, came to me and took me by the hand, and somehow or other I seemed to be able to walk by his side and move as he moved. He showed me the flowers, told me their names, pointed out their beauties and their nature. At length we came to a plant that stood out by itself, near the hedge. It was a green, leafless, shapeless, ugly-looking thing. I wanted to crush it. It was a real deformity, and seemed as if made just to show how ugly it could look. Just as I was going to kick it, the owner held me back. 'Stop,' said he; 'I value that flower above every other. Watch it.' And as I watched it, I saw its buds grow red, then swell, then open, till out burst the

most beautiful flower I ever saw. It was large, red and purple, with long, white petals, as if feeling for the light; and the inside of the flower looked as if sunset had spread her satin robe there, and had forgotten to take it away. I clapped my hands for delight, and wondered how so much beauty *could* grow out of such deformity.

"'Oh, sir, what a flower! I never saw so beautiful a thing. What is its name?'

"'It is called the *cactus speciosissimus*, my child. There is no flower like it for beauty, or for growing out of such a stalk. Oh, child, don't you see how God can make beauty to grow out of deformity? And don't you see how, out of your poor body, he can train and bring a character and a soul beautiful as an angel? There is no flower in my garden that I think of and admire so much as this; and depend upon it, there is no child He thinks of more than you. If you will bow to his wisdom, love and obey his Son Jesus Christ, he will bring out of you a character most beautiful.'

"Then mother, he left me, and I looked again at the cactus, and it was turned into a little girl; and I looked again, and saw it was myself! Oh, what a dream! And oh, dear mother, I will love Jesus, and never mourn again that I am a poor, feeble, deformed child."

Little Nellie.

SOONER or later in the experience of life we all feel alike. The poor family in the cottage as they bury their dead, and the rich family in the old mansion when death enters there, have the same emotions created. Their tears and their sorrows are the same, coming from the same human heart. And thus the brotherhood of the human family is maintained more by our afflictions than by anything else. Few can sympathize with David as the king of a great nation; but how many can sympathize with him as a father, weeping over his lost Absalom! Few can know how the king felt in his glory; but when he comes to die—not the king, nor the great warrior, nor the immortal poet even, but "David, the son of Jesse"—all can love him then.

I am thinking of a beautiful home which I *knew* many years ago, in which was so much to

make life pleasant. It stood on an eminence, and overlooked an expanse of water, where all forms of shipping, from the huge steamer to the little tow-boat, were constantly moving. The sea-gulls flew thick and screamed loud just before the storm, and the sunbeams flashed and twinkled on the silver surface in the calm.

The house was large, handsome, convenient, and had everything about it to make it pleasant. It stood in the middle of a gently sloping lawn, with just enough of ancient trees in clumps to make it a perfect landscape. The walks so tastefully curving and winding through the grounds; the shrubbery seemingly thrown here and there, though according to the highest art; the flowers of all forms and hues;—indeed, everything was so complete and perfect that nothing seemed superfluous and nothing wanting.

The family who occupied this beautiful home were educated, wealthy, refined, and most respectable; they were well-bred, generous, and kind; but they had a fulness of everything, and it seemed as if there could be no tie of sympathy between them and the rest of the world, save the very few who were in like circumstances.

But there was one tie, one chord of sympathy between them and the poorest family in the whole neighbourhood, and that tie was "little Nellie."

Little Nellie was their youngest child; and a sweeter, lovelier specimen of humanity was seldom seen. But little Nellie was blind—stone blind, born blind. Not one ray of light had ever reached her eyes, and she never knew how the beautiful light or anything else looked. How tenderly the mother bent over her, and watched her. Truly she loved her with a depth of love which no language can express. Little Nellie was the centre of all plans and thoughts, and the whole family gathered around her with a tenderness impossible to describe. She was with them six years only, when she opened her eyes in a world where all is light.

Down near the water's edge was a fisherman's small, humble home. In that was a little blind boy just about Nellie's age. These little ones were early brought together, and it was found that there was a mysterious sympathy between them, with which no one could intermeddle. They loved to be together, to talk and play together, and neither seemed to know that the one home was any better than the other. A few months before little Nellie was called away, they were overheard talking together.

"Tommy, do you know anything of what it is to *see*, as my mother does?"

"No, I only feel. I can't see anything."

"But don't you wish you *could* see?"

"Why, I don't know. I should not know how to see, I think."

"Oh, I wish I could see,—once, only once, Tommy, and that for a little while."

"What do you want to see so much?"

"Why, my own mother's face."

"How do you think it would look?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I try to think very often. But I think it would look *just like a very sweet sound!*"

Dear child; she could imagine nothing more beautiful and lovely than *her own mother's voice.* What conception of form could she have more beautiful than this?

I will not pain my reader by a description of the manner the frail house without windows in which Nellie's spirit dwelt was taken down; nor will I mention the hymns that she sang on her dying bed, so tender, so sweet, and so confiding; nor the deep agonies that rolled through that family as they listened for the footsteps of Death; nor the sweet smile left on the face of the child as she sung herself to sleep in the arms of Jesus; nor shall I try to picture her joy as she awoke in Heaven.

Little Tommy survived her but a few months, and everything possible to be done for his comfort was done by Nellie's parents. The little ones—it would have been done even if Tommy

had not requested it—were laid side by side in the grave. "Pleasant and lovely in their lives, in their death they were not divided."

And what was the mission of "little Nellie" here? Plainly to create a human sympathy in her family, which has been a great force ever since. It softened them all, and made them feel that the fisherman's child and their own were alike in time and alike in eternity. It weaned their hearts from earth, and made them follow their treasure. And although no poet has embalmed their "little Nellie" in song, as Burns did his "Highland Mary," yet all who knew that family knew that no blessing ever bestowed upon them taught them to become such blessings to others as the life and death of this dear child. It was "little Nellie's" mission.

The Queen's Decision.

ONCE upon a time, long ago, the queen of language sent forth a proclamation that on such a day there would be a convention of all classes of people, who might take her trusty servants, the Alphabet, consisting of twenty-six letters, and the one who should form the sweetest word should be seated next to the queen, and receive a crown of gold.

Far and wide the proclamation went, and multitudes began to study what word they would form; but lest somebody else should select a chosen word, every one kept silent and only looked wise, as much as to say, "I know something, if I only chose to tell."

At length the day arrived; and there was the queen, and the crown, and the alphabet, and all the multitude. The question now was, who should first spell what he considered the most beautiful word in the world. So the queen told

them all carefully to write their word and fold it up and cast it into a box which she had prepared. She would then draw them out by lot, read the word aloud, call upon the writer to stand up, and she would then decide upon each. So she drew all the multitude closely around her, and all were hushed and silent when she put in her hand and drew out a paper. Upon opening it, she read aloud, "*Money.*"

"Whose is this?" asked the queen.

"It is mine," said an old, hard-faced miser.

"And why do you think this the sweetest word in human language?" said she.

"Because, madam, money is what all want, all toil for, and all rejoice over. It will buy anything, do anything, and, as the Good Book says, 'Money answereth all things.' It is the sweetest word ever spoken."

"I beg leave to differ from you, sir. You pervert the meaning of the Good Book. You say money will do anything, and procure anything. Is that so? Will it raise the sick man from a bed of pain? Will it cheer or save the dying man? Will it heal a wounded conscience? Will it restore the dead babe to its mother's arms? Will it open the door of Heaven to the soul, or make immortality blessed? No; it is a slippery servant, to minister to the wants of the body, or to raise the pride, or to pamper

the appetites, or a hard master to grind the poor. It is anything but the sweetest word."

She then put her hand again into the box and drew out a paper, on which was written the word "*Honour.*"

"Who claims this?"

"I do," said a fine-looking young man, dressed in splendid military garments.

"And what is your plea for your favourite word?" said the queen.

"Why, madam, it seems to me too plain for argument. The child at school, the boy on the play-ground, the parent in planning for his child, the scholar in wasting life over his books, the sailor risking his life on the stormy ocean, the politician in wrestling for position, and the soldier rushing up to the cannon's mouth—all are witnesses that *honour* is the word, above all others, that is the sweetest to the human ear."

"You plead well," said the queen; "but I cannot agree with you. Honour is a powerful instrument with which to move men to effort and action; but you will notice that it appeals to and cultivates supreme selfishness in the heart, shuts out domestic affections, tramples on the most sacred rights of others, seeks its place through fields of blood, and often fills nations with wailing. I cannot allow you the premium, sir."

Again the fair hand of the queen drew a paper from the box, and on it was written the word "*Love.*"

"Whose may this be?" asked the queen in a softened voice.

"Mine, madam," said a young man whose face was glowing with excitement, while a thousand youths around him, and as many bright-eyed maidens, seemed ready to shout.

"And your reasons, sir?"

"It is not a matter of reason, madam, but it is the verdict of the mother over her babe, of that babe as soon as he can return her smile, of the child longing for home, of the widow in her desolation, of youth seeking the dearest friend the earth knows, of age leaning upon the child for support. It is sung in the songs of the birds, echoed in the notes of the mourning dove, and it thrills in the language of every living thing. We have reason to believe that it reaches the angels of heaven."

"A strong plea, certainly," said the queen; "but I must have time to think further upon it before I decide."

Once more she drew from the box, and the word was read amid great silence, "JESUS."

"Whose is this?" said the queen in a low, soft tone.

"I wrote it," said a sweet little girl, almost

sinking under the eyes that were turned upon her.

"And can you, my child, tell me the reasons why you think 'Jesus' the sweetest word in the world?"

"No; I only feel so."

"Truly, little one, you feel aright. There is no attribute of humanity, no beauty of character, no greatness in our idea, nothing exalted, refined, gentle, loving, or good which is not found in him. There is no language on Earth into which 'Jesus' cannot be introduced untranslated. The Jew, the Greek, the Hottentot, and the refined nations of the Earth all sing the same name. It *is* the sweetest word on Earth, and probably the sweetest in Heaven. Come, little child, and sit by my side and receive this golden crown, faint emblem of the crown which Jesus will one day place upon thy head."

The Resurrection.

PERHAPS my young reader does not know, as he sees the plain, coarse, sorrel-coloured caterpillar creeping on the ground, that this caterpillar has a butterfly within him, and that his body is little else than a creeping cradle. And yet it is just so. Those men who are so skilful in dissecting men and animals tell us that in cutting a caterpillar in pieces they can clearly see the form and shape of the butterfly. Perhaps my reader does not know that in the autumn this little caterpillar creeps up on a small bush, and there weaves around him a sort of shroud, in which he coils up and dies. There he hangs through all the cold snows and storms of winter. The winds rock him, but there is no life apparent. Freezing does not hurt him. Inside of that little shroud there is nothing but a thick fluid. But when the winter is past and the warm spring returns, the sun falls upon

this apparently dead thing, the shroud bursts open, and out comes, not the caterpillar, but a beautiful butterfly!

There is a still more curious thing connected with our caterpillar. Everything in the world seems to have some enemy, some destroyer, so that, as the Bible says, "the whole creation groaneth." There is a peculiar kind of *fly* found wherever the caterpillar lives. She has a long tail, and in that tail a little lance or sting, with which she bores a hole. When she sees a caterpillar creeping on the ground, what does she do but pop down and sting the poor fellow in his back. But that is not all; for in doing this she thrusts a little egg into the body of the caterpillar. Perhaps near him is another of his race which the fly did not see. Now the sting pierced the poor fellow, but did not kill him. He creeps along and lives through the summer, and forgets all about the sting. He winds up in autumn and nestles in his shroud just as any caterpillar would. But now look out! that little egg that seemed to be too small to do any hurt, hatches *in* the caterpillar, and goes to work and eats up the butterfly; so that when the warm sun of the spring comes, and the grass springs up, and the leaves burst out of the trees, and the flowers open, and when the butterfly *ought* to burst out into life, there is no resurrection for him. He has been destroyed by

the sting. Perhaps on a bush close by another hangs, and out of that the beautiful butterfly emerges. Poor fellow. There is, however, no great harm done. We have a miserable-looking fly instead of the beautiful creature which we should have had. The butterfly seems like an angel beside him.

And may not every child learn a great lesson from this? The Bible tells us that "the hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth, to the resurrection of life, or to the resurrection of damnation." By the resurrection of the spring we see that it is easy for God to raise the dead grass, the dead leaves, and the dead worm. So it will be easy for him to raise men from the sleep of the grave. But we see that instead of rising a beautiful creation, we may come forth like the fly, hideous and undesired. We have all been stung by sin, and that soul which is within us is destroyed. It is not killed, but so injured that, unless cured of the sting, it will rise to "shame and everlasting contempt." And this is what the blessed Redeemer has done: He has provided a cure, so that if we go to him for healing, we shall not come forth out of our graves covered with shame and contempt. The difference between us and the poor caterpillar is this: While only here and there one is stung, we are

all stung and poisoned by sin. "The sting of death is sin." While there is no cure for him, there *is* one for us, and an angel form may come out of our coffin. While he has lost only one short life, we may lose life everlasting. Whenever I see a caterpillar moving along on the ground, I wonder if he is already stung, and if the butterfly will have no resurrection. And whenever I see an immortal man I know he has felt the sting of sin, and I wonder if he has been to the Great Physician for cure, in order that he may awake in the likeness of Christ and live in God's glory for ever.

My dear young reader, how is it with you? Has the divine hand of the Son of God taken away the sting, so that you will have part with him in the first resurrection? "Blessed are they who have part in the first resurrection."

Calling the Ferryman.

THEY reached the river, the father and his little daughter, late in the evening. The woods through which they had passed reached to the very brink; and as the night was cloudy and very dark, the foliage seemed to render the gloom profoundly deep. Far away on the opposite shore was here and there a twinkling light in the small, scattered houses; while farther off still were the bright lamps of the great city whither they were going. The little child was weary and sleepy, and chilled by the evening air. Nothing but urgency would have induced the father to be out with her thus. When they came to the ferry, they found the boat over on the other side, where the ferryman lived. So the father shouted and called, but no voice answered; then he would walk to and fro, and speak to his child, and try to comfort her; then he would call again and again. At length they

saw a little twinkling light, and heard something on the water. Nearer and nearer the sound came; but it was too dark to see the boat. At last it came across, and the travellers entered it.

"Father!"

"Well, my child?"

"It's very dark, and I can't see the shore where we are going."

"No, little one; but the ferryman knows the way and we shall soon be over, and then soon home in the city, where will be light and a good fire."

"Oh, I wish we were there, father."

Slowly and gently the boat swung off in the stream; and though it was dark, and the river seemed to run fast, they were carried safely over, and the child soon forgot her great fear. In a short time after they landed she reached her home, where loving arms received her; where the room was warm with fire and was flooded with light. On the bosom of love she rested, and her chills and terrors passed away.

Some months after this the same little child had come to another river, darker, deeper, and more fearful still. It was the River of Death. When she first came near it the air seemed cold, and darkness covered it, and all seemed like night. The same loving father stood near her, distressed that his child must cross this river and he not be

able to go with her. For days and nights he had been, along with her mother, watching over her, and leaving her bedside only long enough to take his meals and pray for the life of his precious child.

For hours she had been slumbering very quietly, and it seemed as if her spirit would pass away without her waking again; but just before the morning watch she suddenly awoke, with the eye bright, the reason unclouded, and every faculty alive. A sweet smile was playing on her face.

"Father, I have come again to the river-side, and am again waiting for the ferryman to come and carry me over."

"Does it seem dark and cold, as it did when we crossed the river?"

"Oh no! There are no dark, gloomy trees here. The river is not black, but covered with floating silver. The boat coming towards me seems to be made of solid light; and though the ferryman looks dark, I am not afraid of him."

"Can my child see across the river?"

"Oh yes! but instead of the little twinkling light here and there, as before, I can see a great, beautiful city, flooded with light and glory. I see no sun and no lamp, no moon nor stars; but it is full of light. Ah, I hear music too, coming softly over the river, sweet as the angels could make."

"Can you see any one on the other bank of the river?"

"Why, why, yes! I see One, the most beautiful form I ever saw; and what a face! what a smile! And now he beckons me to come. Oh ferryman, make haste. I know who it is. It is Jesus—my own blessed Jesus. I shall be received into his arms; I shall rest in his bosom."

"Is my little daughter afraid?" said her mother.

"Afraid, dear mother? Not a bit! I think of my psalm: 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'"

And thus she crossed the dark river, made like a silver stream by the presence of the blessed Redeemer. The father and mother wept, but joy and sorrow mingled in their tears. They could almost see the golden gates open to receive their loved one; and they then understood the words of the prophet: "The child shall die a hundred years old."